THE GUIDE TO COMICS • 59

SUPERMAN THE ANIMATED SERIES PREVIEWED

WIZARD®

Tucci & STULL

JULY 1996

$4.55 USA $5.99 CANADA

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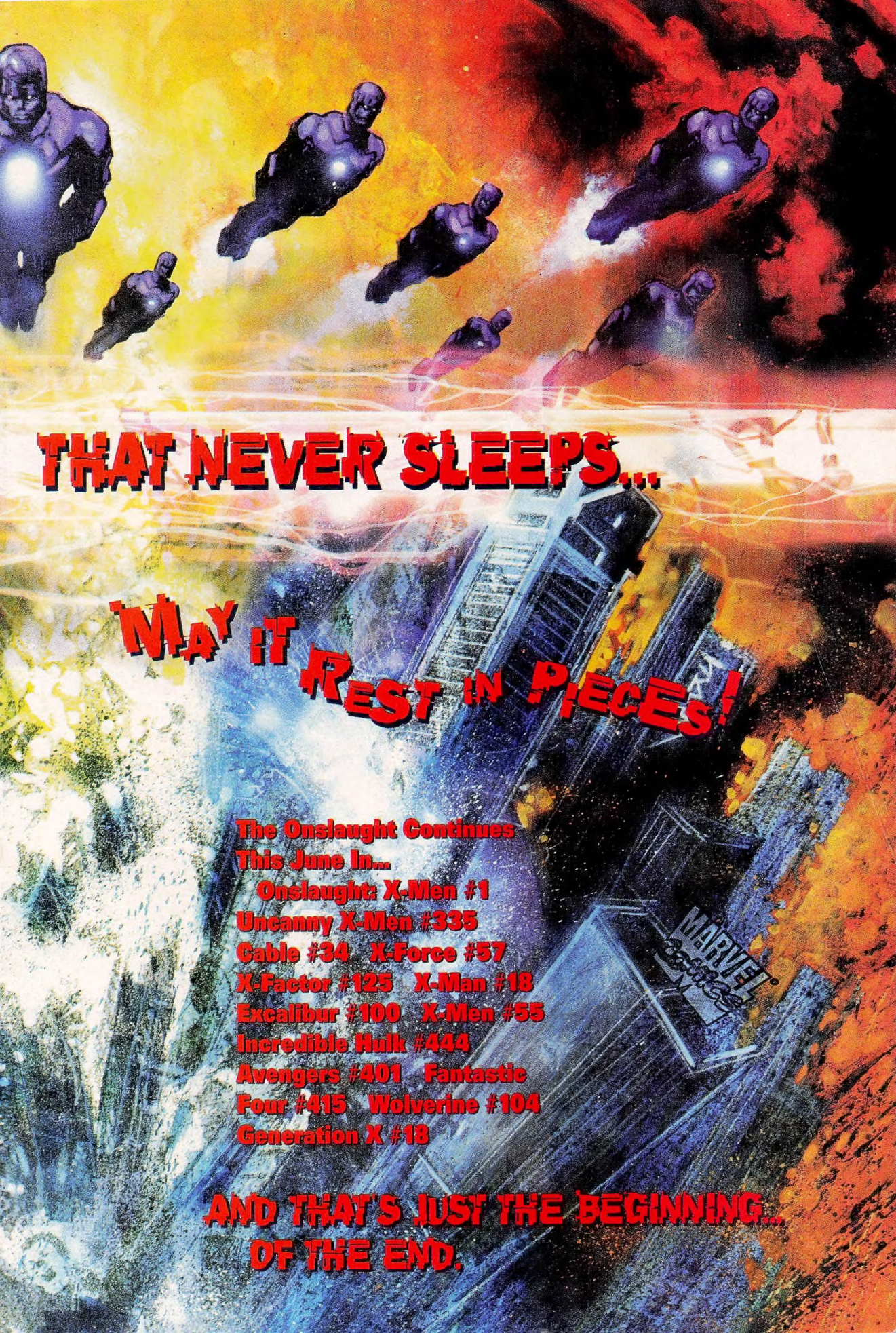
THAT NEVER SLEEPS...
MAY IT REST IN PIECES!
The Onslaught Continues
This June In...
Onslaught: X-Men #1
Uncanny X-Men #335
Cable #34 X-Force #57
X-Factor #125 X-Man #18
Excalibur #100 X-Men #55
Incredible Hulk #444
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Four #415 Wolverine #104
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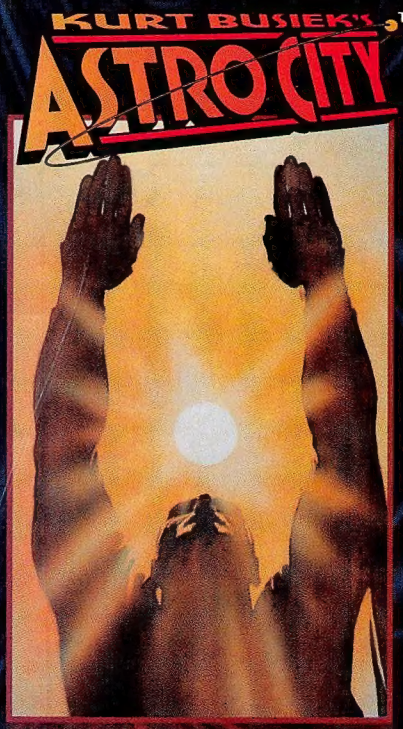
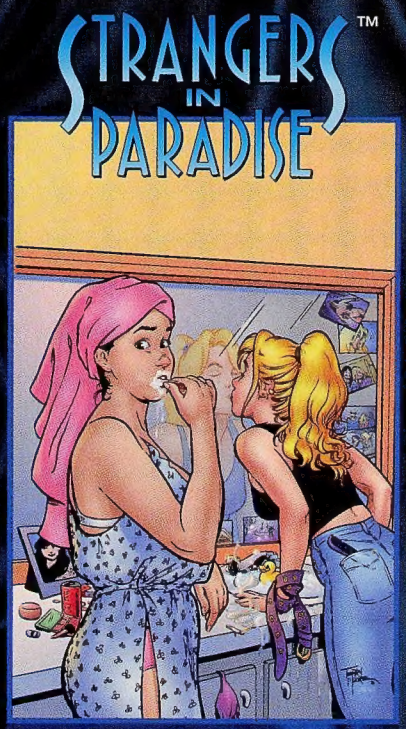


KURT BUSIEK
BRENT ANDERSON
WILL BLYBERG
Covers by
ALEX ROSS
Astro City: Life in the Big City trade paperback coming in July.
Kurt Busiek's Astro City Volume 2, #1 coming in August.



TERRY MOORE
Strangers in Paradise Volume 3, #1 coming in August.

JAMES ROBINSON
PAUL SMITH
Leave it To Chance #1, coming in September.

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RESPECT FOR YOU.

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WIZARD®

Number 59
JULY 1996

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AND I THOUGHT *MY* HEAD WAS BIG!

ARE YOU READY FOR THE SUMMER?

I've just finished planning my summer schedule and it's brutal, but I'll make it. Fifteen cities over a three-month period—talk about frequent flyer miles. I'll be at many shows this summer, including the San Diego Comic Con, Dragon Con (where the *Wizard* Fan Awards will be held) and Gen Con, to name a few. Make sure you come out to see us—we'll be giving away lots of cool prizes!

This month, depending on where you bought your *Wizard*, you will have received one of two awesome covers—Shi by Billy Tucci or Superman by the ever-popular Joe Quesada.

We've also got a great array of editorial coverage from stories on Onslaught (who's gaining tremendous public awareness and is our featured Chromium Card guest) to the Superman cartoon. Read what Frank Miller has to say in a no-holds-barred Q&A. Learn what's happening with the Legion of Super-Heroes—DC's sleeper team—and the all-new Justice League of America. Joe Linsner did an incredible *Dawn* #1/2 for us this month—make sure you read our story on him.

Brian Douglas Ahern's monthly calendar has been creating quite a buzz, so we've decided to create more visual features like it. Last month, we took a look at a "Super Villain Garage Sale" (by Brian Ahern)—this month, we examine our very own "Superhero High School Yearbook" (by Tom Grummett). Please write me with any suggestions you have for visual features like this.

Recently, we supplied you with an AOL disk. If you haven't signed on yet, make sure you do, and check out the "Wizard World" area. We've been very active online, setting up some cool clubs and awesome guests. There's tons of never-before-seen photos too.

This month also marks the release of our Wolverine Special which will be followed by a Spawn Special due out in May—a pair of *Wizard* special issues unlike anything you've ever seen before. There's a lot of great info in both issues, so make sure you check them out. Each Special contains eight posters, so if you're looking to fill wall space, these are perfect.

Next month, I know you'll be here for our five-year anniversary issue. We've got a monster issue planned, with a whole bunch of new stuff, including a double-sided Spawn Chromium Card and a *Lady Death: The Odyssey* #1/2 offer. Both of these you won't be able to live without...

See ya next month,

Gareb S. Shamus

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Shi Cover Art Billy Tucci, colored by IHOC

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MAGIC WORDS

Finish Up Already

The big topic of conversation this month? No doubt about it: Unfinished Business or as it's now called, Heroes Reborn. We'll do what we can to quench your thirst for knowledge about the upcoming Marvel/Lee/Liefeld projects (including a *Wizard*-exclusive Heroes Reborn #1/2 offer coming in issue #61), 'cause you're telling us that's what you want to know about. We start this month with a pair of Heroes Reborn letters, before getting into the "industry pro" section of this month's column...

Dear Wizard:

My compliments on "The Art of the Deal" feature from issue #55, explaining Rob Liefeld and Jim Lee's return to Marvel on a work-for-hire basis. I really enjoyed it, but not because of what it means for *Iron Man, Captain America, Fantastic Four* and *Avengers.* I liked the article because of how it got me excited about the comics industry in general and Marvel in particular. I believe the business needs more such events to increase excitement levels, thereby saving itself from what might otherwise be an ugly future. *DC versus Marvel* was big, as were "The Age of Apocalypse" and "The Death of Superman," but these alone are just not enough.

Despite my excitement, I'm not yet sure if I will pick up the "re-revitalized" Marvel titles. I'm positive many others will, whether they be die-hard fans of the characters and/or new creators, or are just curious to see what's going on. This is good. At least things are happening to get people to buy comics.

Maybe these new Marvels will be best-sellers...or maybe they'll flop. But the point is that things are happening again, things are exciting and I haven't felt this good about comics since the days just following *Crisis on Infinite Earths.*

Chris Hines
Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada

Okay, ugly truth time: Of the tons of mail on Heroes Reborn we got this month, the vast majority of it was negative. But one thing is apparent—Heroes Reborn is exciting people. The curiosity factor is incredibly high and, make no mistake, many people (some of whom are the ones writing negative letters about it) will be reading these books. Just like Chris said, some will be reading for creator affinity and some will be reading for character affinity. And some people will undoubtedly avoid these books for these same reasons, or just because they're against the whole idea. But I think most people will be reading, and reading out of curiosity. The books might turn out to be the best darned things to hit the shelves in years or they might turn out to be crap on a stick. But you'll never know until you try them.

At this point, Heroes Reborn is an unqualified success in terms of getting people talking, grabbing headlines and, yes, generating excitement. And this is all in advance of any actual comics. All we need now are some good books to back it all up. Let's hope the creators are up to the task.

To That Swell Guy McLauchlin,

I have some questions about Rob Liefeld and Jim Lee taking over *Captain America, Avengers, Fantastic Four and Iron Man:*

1) I've heard that Mark Waid, who was the writer for *Captain America,* won't be writing it while Liefeld is in control of the title. Is this true? If this is true, what issue is Waid's last issue on the title?

2) Mark Waid was supposed to be the writer for *Avengers* starting with issue #400, but with Rob Liefeld taking the title over, will Waid write this series at all? Who will do the art?

3) I know Jim Lee will draw *Fantastic Four* and Whilce Portacio will be the artist for *Iron Man,* but who will be writing these titles?

4) Will these series start over with a #1, or will they continue to be numbered as they are now?

5) Why is Marvel doing this? I was never in my life a *Cap* fan, but since Waid has taken the title over, it's been one of my favorites. I know I'm not alone. Fans have given a great response to Waid and Garney's Cap, so why is Marvel trying to "revamp" a title that has just been "revamped" greatly and selling well?

Guy Davis
Seal Beach, CA

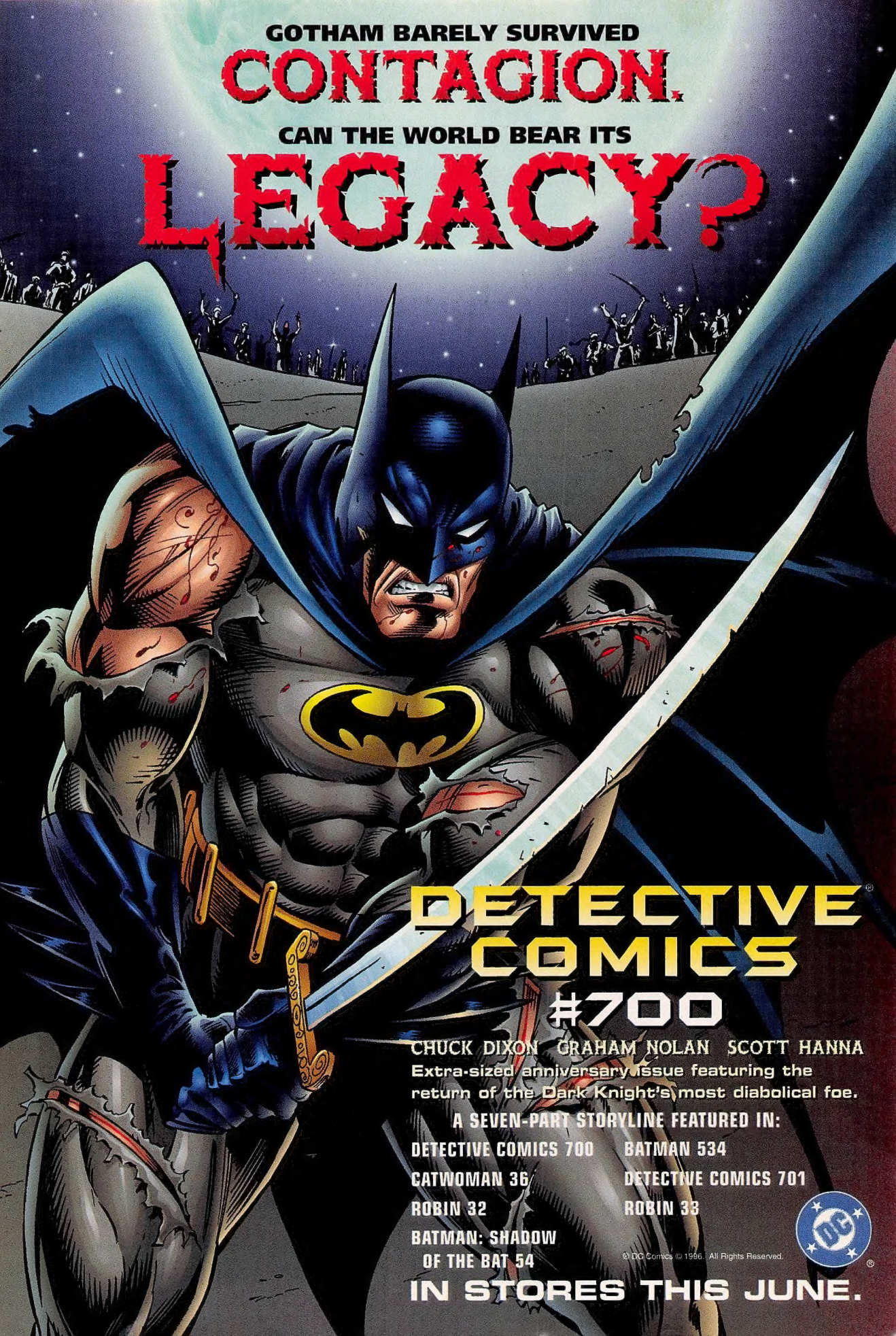
Lucky for you, I've got some answers:

1) This is true. Waid's last issue on Cap will be #454. The new Captain America creative team will be Chuck Dixon and Rob Liefeld.

2) Waid will be around for issues #400-#402. After that, Jim Valentino and Liefeld will be writing the Avengers. No artist has been selected yet.

3) The writers on FF will be Brandon Choi and Jim Lee, while Scott Lobdell and Jim

THESE LETTERS ARE GUARANTEED HAND-PICKED FOR FRESHNESS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IN STORES THIS JUNE.

Lee handle the writing chores on Iron Man.

4) All four of the titles will start numbering with a new #1 issue.

5) Of our aforementioned letters on Heroes Reborn, many have dealt with the fact that people do not want to see Mark Waid and Ron Garney leave Cap. As to the "why" behind it, Marvel spokesperson Tracey Vogt said, "Our intention is to rejuvenate Marvel and rejuvenate the industry by creating excitement. Mark Waid and Ron Garney have done a great job on Cap and we'll continue to work with them on many other titles, but this was something that was started even before Waid and Garney started on the title."

THE BUNNY AWARD

Paul Schiraldi

Jim takes one of his favorite letters of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this nor is there a prize.

Dear Wizard,

What's the difference between Moebis, Moebius, Morbius and more B.S.?

Khoa Vuong
San Jose, CA

Carl Moebis works for comic show promoter Great Eastern Conventions, Moebius is a famous French comic artist, Morbius is Marvel's "living vampire" character and more B.S. is what I do here every month.

Dear Wizards,

I was surprised and a little disappointed by some of the daunting analyses of women's chances of making it in comics in the lettercol of your issue #55. I hope you'll let me present a dissenting view.

Yeah, it can be tough to overcome prejudice, but it's no tougher for a woman cartoonist than it's been for women in medicine, sports, law or the myriad other fields we enter in growing numbers every year. And remember—it's not like succeeding big at this game is a walk in the park for anyone, whatever their gender.

To view something inherent and unchangeable about yourself—like sex, race, height or whatever—as something that will hold you back seems like a good way to limit your own chances for success and make yourself nuts in the process. In the end, there are only three real reasons for anyone's not getting a certain job:

1) Either the quality of your work is not up to snuff;

2) Or the style of your work isn't right for that assignment;

3) Or the editor (or publisher) is a jerk.

So if you hang in there and keep pitching, sooner or later your skill will improve, or you'll get an assignment your style fits, or you'll run into one of the ever-increasing number of editors and publishers who are not jerks.

I'm sure you at *Wizard* join me in wishing all the writers and artists out there who happen to be female every chance at success, and I know we all look forward to the day when one of us cracks your "hot lists."

Cheers!

Jo Duffy
Long Beach, NY

For those of you scoring at home, Jo Duffy is a comic writer who counts Glory, Catwoman and Akira among her credits, and she raises a good point: Making a living in comics ain't no teddy bear picnic for anyone, man or woman. But to view your gender or any other quality that you possess as something that holds you back is self-defeating. Things like comic writing or comic drawing are disciplines that require a lot of practice. Keep plugging away and you will invariably get better. After that, it's just a matter of time and luck. But no one can have enough time or get lucky if they consider themselves done before they even start. You can't succeed until you at least try.

Wizard Folk:

I found your article "American Manga" in *Wizard* #56 quite informative, but also lacking in two respects.

First, you were lacking any mention of Michael Golden, the brilliant artist who I truly believe introduced the manga style to mainstream superhero comics. This saddens me because Mr. Golden's work is very scarce these days, with the exception of occasional covers, usually unsigned. I think that newer readers of comics would be done a great disservice if *Wizard* didn't show some examples of Michael Golden's genius. This is the man who inspired all of today's superstar artists.

Secondly, why was Humberto Ramos omitted? He does manga better than anyone!

I'm sure there are many more (like Adam Warren of *Dirty Pair*, for example), who it would've been great to have incorporated into that wonderful article. How about a follow-up?

Always Reading,

Joe Quesada
Event Comics

We would've absolutely loved to have been able to cover Michael Golden as part of "American Manga," but all the artists we featured were artists that we were able to interview. Golden keeps a very low profile and we were unable to reach him. You can look for Golden's work in the near future in Spartan X, a Jackie Chan mini-series from Topps Comics.

Humberto Ramos and Adam Warren were simple oversights. A reprisal article is a possibility. We're getting more letters about manga these days than we ever have before.

Dear Magic Words,

I have no problem with real Japanese manga in America, but I do with the "Americanization" of it. Ever since the American "manga craze" started, everyone is trying to draw manga, and everyone's art is starting to look the same!

The problem seems to be that most Americans think that everyone in Japan draws the same. Here in America, you can hardly distinguish J. Scott Campbell from Roger Cruz from Humberto Ramos. Meanwhile in American art, Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko look nothing alike. So why is it so hard to see that Naoko Takeuchi's and Akira Toriyama's styles are nothing alike? If everyone suddenly wants to do "manga," why can't they do it in their own style? And why make such a big deal out it? The old "American" style was already great! And truthfully, "American manga" looks like wanna-be Japanese art that doesn't measure up to the real deal.

J.C. Hu
Hayward, CA

I agree. All comic artists are in some way

derivative of someone who has gone before them. That's part of how people learn to draw—they look at what others have done. And this is hardly a new phenomenon. In the early '70s, after Neal Adams hit it big, comics were full of Neal Adams clones. So too in the early '80s, when John Byrne was all the rage, a slew or artists came around trying to draw just like Byrne. Many '90s artists have a lot of Todd McFarlane in them. But aping someone else's style is not "stylistic" at all—it's merely copying, and usually flawed copying at that. There's nothing wrong with drawing a little inspiration from someone else's work, provided you mix in a healthy dose of what makes your art yours. If no one did that, art would never evolve. The Adams, Byrne and McFarlane clones are invariably weaker than the artists they tried to imitate. We can do a lot better than a new generation of manga clones.

Wizard,

Who would win in a fight between the Punisher and Hong Kong Phooey? While we're at it, what type of car does Hong Kong Phooey have? And since Phooey is a janitor, how did he get enough money to buy that car?

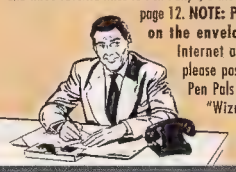
Charles Laws
Rapid City, SD

I can tell you that Hong Kong Phooey, number one super guy, Hong Kong Phooey, quicker than the human eye, could absolutely mop the friggin' floor with the Punisher.

As to the car, I couldn't remember what model it was, so I appealed to Michael Diaz at Hanna-Barbera, who said that the car was called the "Phooeymobile." He said that Phooey got the money for the car by "hard work and savings."

Hey! It's Pen Pals

Meet your fellow comic fans! Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the Magic Words address on page 12. **NOTE: Please write your age on the envelope.** If you want your Internet address listed instead, please post your info in the new Pen Pals message board on our "Wizard World" forum on America Online. Hey, make a friend!



Dear Wizard,

I am 14 years old and I love to read comic books. I read all the X-titles and some Spidey titles. It's very difficult to afford all these comic books on what I make. So I am begging Marvel Comics to lower their prices.

I know they can make and sell comics for less than two bucks an issue (to say nothing of

P E N P A L S

Kurt Pious
Age: 16 Sex: Male
364 Main Street
East Setauket, NY 11733
Likes: *Bone, Johnny the Homicidal Maniac, X-titles*

Lee U-Wen
Age: 16 Sex: Male
6 Greenloaf Place
Singapore 279411
Likes: *Gen[13], Shi, Double Impact*

Catherine H. Kalina
Age: 20 Sex: Female
360 Old Town Road
Trumbull, CT 06611
Likes: *Legends of the D.K., Batman, Detective*

Tom Hosen
Age: 20 Sex: Male
37 Hemlock Road
New Haven, CT 06515
Likes: *Star Wars titles, Bone, Sin City titles*

Kris "The Beast" Abel
Age: 15 Sex: Female
16830 Cranford Lane
G.P. City, MI 48230
Likes: *X-Files, Sandman,* all Vertigo titles

Todd Mabbott
Age: 12 Sex: Male
841 Grenfell Ave. V1Y-5J3
Kelowna, B.C., Canada
Likes: *Pitt, Venom, Wolverine*

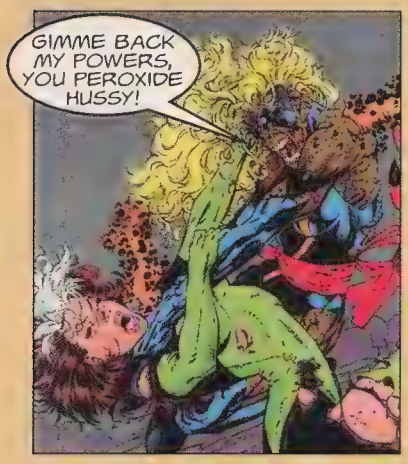
Kasey Spencer
Age: 12 Sex: Male
4305 W. County Road 1100
South Paris Crossing, IN 47270
Likes: *Wolverine, Cable, Spider-Man*

some specials that they charge up to five bucks for), because they put out those excellent 99-cent titles, which in my opinion are some of the best books on the racks. All they have to do is drop the super-glossy pages and chromium covers. Fans don't care about those things. We just want great stories and quality art.

Marvel, please think about this. If you don't lower your prices, I will have to stop reading some comics that I enjoy very much. I bet I'm not the only one who feels this way.

Nathan Holmes
Coeur d'Alene, ID
N1kiai@aol.com

I bet you're right. Fortunately, Marvel is moving in that direction as we live and breathe. Starting with its May-shipping titles, Marvel has started a series of price rollbacks and page increases. Many old $1.95 titles are now $1.50, and many X- and Spider-books that carry a $1.95 cover have been bulked up to 40 pages from the previous 32. Now how's that for quick service? Ain't life grand?



Hey Jim,

How come whenever writers have the X-Men lose their mutant powers for whatever reason (they seem to do that every other issue now), Rogue still has flight and super-strength? Aren't those her mutant powers?

Keith Mosman
Kirkland, WA

Nope. Rogue's mutant power is the ability to temporarily swipe other people's powers when she touches them. Flight and super-strength are powers she permanently swiped from Ms. Marvel when she stayed in contact with her for too long.

Gentlemen,

Is Bill Sienkiewicz related to Polish novelist Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916), who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1905 and who counts among his works *The Teutonic Knights, Quo Vadis, With Fire and Sword, The Deluge* and *Pan Michael?*

Just curious.

Rob Pickering
Springfield, MO

I had no damn idea, so I went to Bill himself, who said, "This question has come up before. I actually asked my grandparents and they were in disagreement. My grandpa says we are related, but my grandmother says no. It's never been important enough to me to get the lineage checked, but I am going to Poland soon, so I'll probably check on it while I'm there."

And here I thought this was just a silly little question.

Magic Words,

Recently, I was fortunate enough to acquire a mint copy of *Action Comics* #1 and *Detective Comics* #27. My comic collection is almost complete. I am currently waiting for issue #8 of *Sonic Disruptors* to hit the stands. Could you possibly tell me when it will be released?

Christopher A. Mozer
Lake Ronkonkoma, NY

That would be approximately the 12th of Never. For the uninitiated out there, Sonic Disruptors was a late-'80s DC mini-series in which the United States Army fought...a rock band. In outer space. It's about as good a story as you imagine. It was scheduled to be a 12-issue series, but was so terrible that DC pulled the plug a bit early. Looks like your collection is destined to be incomplete.

Get Dressed Already!

As we mentioned last month, the fifth annual *Wizard* Halloween Costume Contest is well under way and, unless you're some pathetic excuse for a human being, we want you to enter and win some really cool stuff! Just slap on some kinda homemade comic book/fantasy/sci-fi/whatever costume and take some good photos. Do a good job...naaah...a *great* job and you could be picked as our Grand Prize Winner. What's the loot? Well, we can't say too much, but those fine furry folks at DC Comics are sponsoring this contest and their 13-issue *The Long Halloween* Batman mini-series by Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale will somehow be involved. Yeah, there'll be a whole gaggle o' Runner-Up prizes, too, but do you really care?

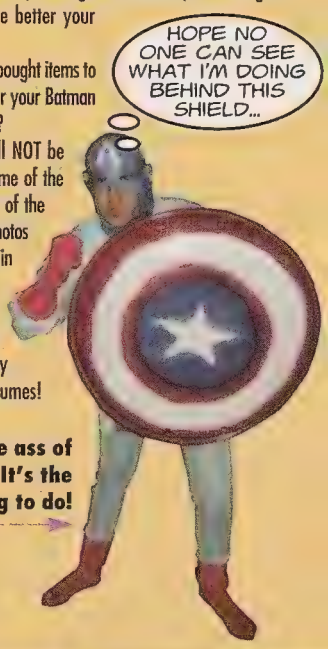
Anyways, here's what you gotta do:

1) Dress up like anyone (or anything) you want—comic book character, video game character, something out of a book or movie, whatever (the more original your get-up, the better your chances of winning).

2) The actual costume itself must be HOMEMADE, but you can add store-bought items to accent your outfit. For example, you can't go out and buy a Batman mask for your Batman costume, but you can use a real yo-yo for your Madman costume, *comprende*?

3) Have someone photograph you in your costume (Polaroids will NOT be accepted!), then write your name, age, full address, phone number and name of the character you're dressed as on a small piece of paper, attach it to the back of the photo (Don't write on the photo!), and send it to the address below. All photos must be color prints, and we suggest taking multiple shots with multiple poses in case some pictures suck. Just remember that magic five-letter word: "focus."

4) Oops, we goofed! To be eligible to win, **we must receive your photo by August 2, 1996**, and not September 3 as we incorrectly reported last month. Sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused you. So get off yer duff already and start makin' some costumes!



Send your entry to:
Costume Contest 5
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-0118

Make a complete ass of yourself. It's the patriotic thing to do!

More details next month!

P E N P A L S

William Hill
Age: 16 Sex: Male
#1-1435 Summit Dr.
Kamloops, B.C. V2E 1S4 Canada
Likes: *Spawn, X-Men, Vampirella*

Katy McGirr
Age: 15 Sex: Female
P.O. Box 1033
St. Marys, Ont. N4X 1B7 Canada
Likes: *X-Men, Generation X, X-Man*

Josh Story
Age: 14 Sex: Male
2048 N. Hwy. 99W #40
McMinnville, OR 97128
Likes: All X-titles, especially *Generation X*

Stephanie Polk
Age: 20 Sex: Female
P.O. Box 1273
Calais, ME 04619
Likes: *Elfquest*, all X-titles, *Mantra*

George West
Age: 21 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 9
Big Creek, KY 40914
Likes: *Spawn, Gen^{13}, Star Wars*

Jason Caire
Age: 25 Sex: Male
jase@hc1.health.sa.gov.au
Likes: *Dawn*, Verotik titles, *Preacher*

Mike Rigby
Age: 21 Sex: Male
XVVZ7A@prodigy.com
Likes: X-titles, *Flash, Impulse*

WHAT IT TAKES №57

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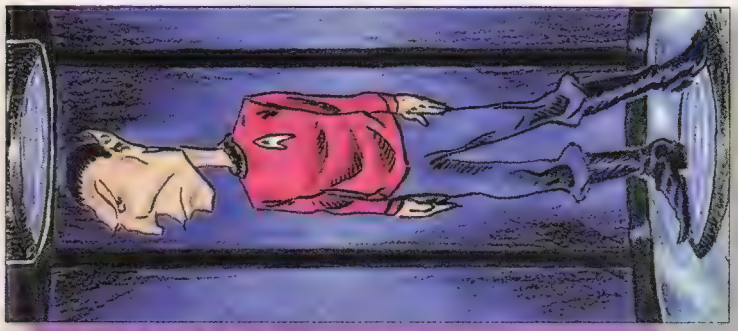
BIG ENTERTAINMENT

LETTER ART

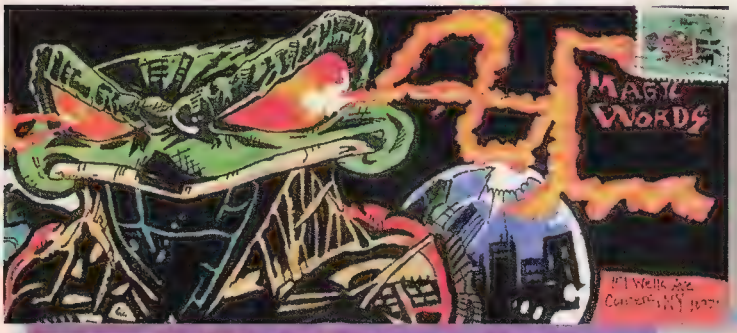
Fans who get their letter art printed will each receive a copy of *Cosmic Powers Unlimited #3* signed by Lovern Kindierski, a Toy Biz Marvel CD-ROM, the issue of *Wizard* in which their envelope appeared signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff, and a funky *Wizard* cap! The creator of the best envelope wins all that neat stuff, *plus* two extra Toy Biz Marvel CD-ROMs! (Thanks for the loot, Toy Biz!) **Artists: Please include a clearly printed return address on the *back* of your envelope.**

envelope of the month

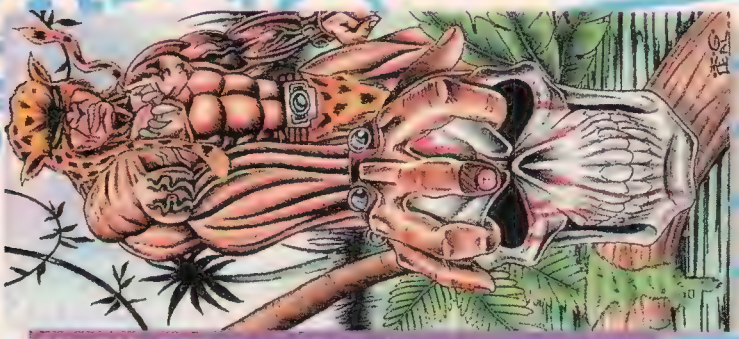
BATMAN AND THE TICK Brian Burke



SPOCK Jared Souza



CYBERFROG Tristan Wyatt



JAGUAR GOD Benny G. Leal

more letters from beyond the grave

Dear Wizard,
Why did you call your magazine "Wizard"?
Daniel Preston
Eagle, CO

Because someone was already using "The Saturday Evening Post."

Dear Wizard,
Please make fun of me.
Mark Wilson
London, Ontario, Canada

No.

Dear Wizard Staff,
1) What is a swirlie?
2) I'm 25! You can tell me what SMF stands for! C'mon, please? I can take it!
Lacey R. Odell
New Orleans, LA

1) A swirlie is, depending on your point of view, one of the most fun or most cruel junior high school pranks. The swirlie process involves holding someone upside-down above a toilet, dunking their head and, while the head is still in the bowl, flushing. As you imagine (or possibly remember), the end result is a wet, swirled hairdo, hence the name. If you're a comic fan, chances are it's happened to you at some point.

2) I'm 27! "SMF" stands for "Scott's Mutant Friends," or occasionally "Small Militant Ferret." Take that.

Dear Wizard,
You guys at *Wizard* rule. I bet you guys get all the chicks.
Kurtis Samson
Hallstead, PA
EmmieSS@aol.com

What chicks? This is the comic biz. To steal a line from someone else, this industry is 95% male and 30% body fat.

We're comic geeks. The only chicks we get are the blow-up kind.

On that puncture-resistant polypropylene note, it's definitely time for me to leave. Catch you swingin' hep cats later. Until then, I remain...

—Jim McLauchlin

Jim McLauchlin's favorite line from the Amalgam books was, "Those who rule by the sword are destined to suffer defeat at the hands of the people." His second favorite was "Chee..."

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MARVEL UNVEILS 'World Without Heroes'

Big fat kid spotted in farmer's field. "Hey, there's a big fat kid in my field," exclaimed stunned farmer. "And he's got my rock."

News of title-cancellation demoralizes once-proud Nordic hero. "Verily, I hath partaken of naught but Fritos for a fortnight. The son of Odin is now truthfully the God of Thunder," proclaimed the flatulent idol of several.

Gamma-irradiated Muppet Babies go berserk, kick puppet ass. "They were unstoppable pieces of bloodthirsty felt. . . none of us stood a chance!" cried battered and beaten puppet.

Not to candycoat it, but Marvel's upcoming "World Without Heroes" storyline brings to mind those old Reese's peanut butter cup commercials where the chocolate bar junkie takes a header straight into the peanut butter freak—and they both suddenly realize they've stumbled onto something mighty tasty.

Marvel had long since laid the groundwork for "**Onslaught**" last year when plans suddenly developed for **Jim Lee** and **Rob Liefeld** to take over the **Fantastic Four** and the **Avengers**. In the face of an imminent logistical smash-up, a brainstorm struck instead: Marvel would use "Onslaught" as a vehicle to shunt its core characters into the Lee-Liefeld realm, with the aftermath giving rise to an epic story in itself, namely, "World Without Heroes."

"When Jim and Rob came aboard, we did sit down and say, 'We can put these two storylines together and make an event out of this,' " said Marvel Editor-in-Chief **Bob Harras**. "Not in the sense of chromium covers or anything, but an event in the sense of a good story."

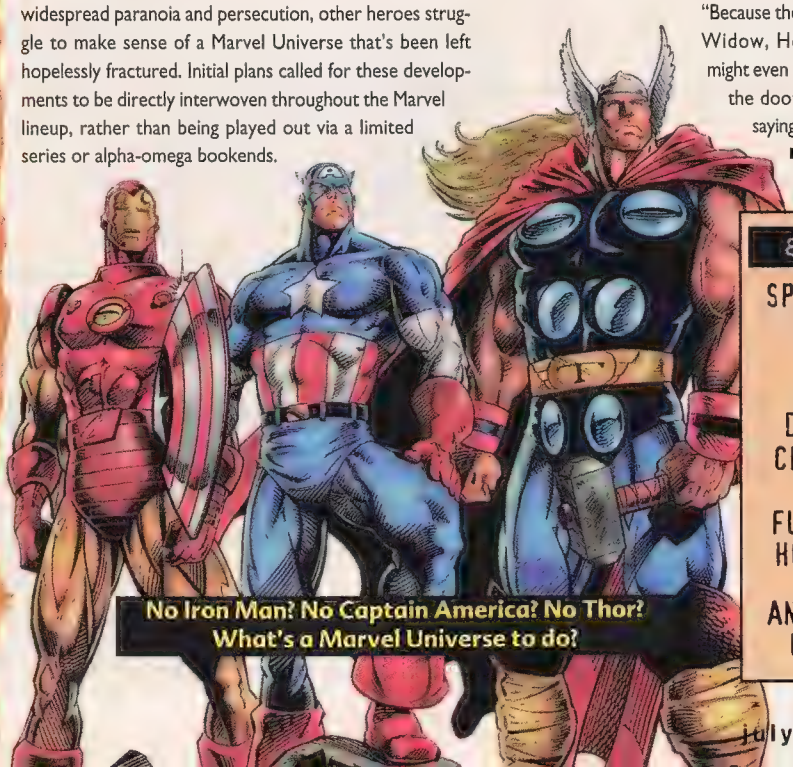
As Harras explained it just prior to a writers powwow last spring, "World Without Heroes" will depict a society universally convinced that the F.F. and Avengers died trying to end Onslaught's threat, and that mutants—Who else?—are responsible. And while the **X-Men** suddenly find themselves targeted (more so than usual, anyway) by widespread paranoia and persecution, other heroes struggle to make sense of a Marvel Universe that's been left hopelessly fractured. Initial plans called for these developments to be directly interwoven throughout the Marvel lineup, rather than being played out via a limited series or alpha-omega bookends.

"The number of characters that Jim and Rob are going to be handling actually isn't all that large," Harras said. "So there are a lot of characters left behind in the wake of 'Onslaught'—Avengers and others who did not go through this sacrifice. The **Black Widow**, for instance, will say, 'Wow, I was an Avenger. Now they're all gone. What's going to happen to my life?' Does she turn to **Daredevil** and say, 'I've got to rethink my whole existence?' "

Harras was especially primed to shake things up for **Quicksilver**, who figured to "lose" both **Crystal** and the **Scarlet Witch** to the Jim-and-Robbery. Again, the prospect seemed to present more questions than answers. "As a character, where would Quicksilver go? Would he hang out with the X-Men? Would he become a loner? That's one of the things I really want to see done right. I don't want to force a character, and I don't want Quicksilver just to say, 'We must now form a new group of Avengers.' I mean, this is a man who's always been so afraid to lose people he loves, and now he's lost two key people in his life. Would he be so wounded that he would just go off and draw in a cave someplace? We're going to see Quicksilver reacting to that loss, and blaming **Magneto** for some of it as well."

The final roster of Marvel icons to be put through the wringer remained sketchy at press time. "That's the fun part, deciding who we want to focus on," Harras said. "Because there's Quicksilver, the Widow, Hercules...Hey, you might even see Jarvis knocking at the door of Xavier's School saying, 'I need a position!' "

■ *Tom Russo*



No Iron Man? No Captain America? No Thor? What's a Marvel Universe to do?

ahead

SPIDER CLONE NO MORE!

SHI AND DAREDEVIL CROSS OVER!

FULL-BLOWN HULK BLITZ!

AND COMPANY UPDATES!

Send Out the Clone

The two-year-long Spider-Clone storyline will finally come to an end in ***Spider-Man #75***, when the saga of the Spider-Clone concludes this October.

"Readers who have left the books because of the clone material, we've heard you," said Spider-Man family editor **Ralph Macchio**. "We know where we went astray a little, and now we're coming back to making Spider-Man what he should be. People who loved Spider-Man before the clone came up are going to love him again."

Macchio reported that nearly all of the plotlines in the four monthly Spider-Man books will come to an end with *Spider-Man* #75, including the identity of the clone, who's the real **Peter Parker**, the questions regarding **Mary Jane**'s pregnancy and, most importantly, who will wear the Spider-Man outfit from now on. Two Spider-Men enter issue #75, and only one will come out.

The clone is no more this fall

"From this point onward, there will only be one Spider-Man," Macchio revealed.

So, who will wear the suit? Adding to the mix of possibilities is the revelation that Peter Parker's Spider-powers will slowly be returning, despite the fact that he "quieted" his spider-influenced DNA in the *Spider-Man: The Final Adventure* mini-series.

As for fans who have been guessing at possible solutions to the clone mystery on the Internet, Macchio revealed that a lot of the guesses so far are off-base. The editor guaranteed that the creative staffs on the four monthly Spider-Man books are pulling out all the stops for the conclusion, and everything, including oddball elements such as **Scrier** and **Judas Traveller**, will be worked into the conclusion. And as for fans who have guessed that either Peter or **Ben Reilly** would die during "**Onslaught**," Macchio reported that through the events of "Onslaught," Peter will return to being Spider-Man, at least part-time and perhaps permanently. But Macchio didn't directly say he would be Spidey. Apparently, ol' Web-Head only has a peripheral role in the crossover.

"We've got our own issues and problems to resolve first before we can play a role in any company-wide things," Macchio said.

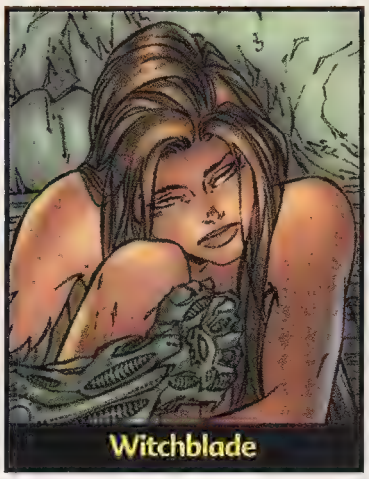
He also stressed that a change is already going on in the Spider-Man books. "We've ended the multi-part stories and the self-absorption that Spider-Man's had for the last two years or so," Macchio commented. "He's back to the heroic, selfless guy that we all remember him being. If people are waiting for #75 to jump back on, its really their loss, because they're going to be missing out on some very good Spider-Man stories." ■ *Matt Brady*

Witchblade bedevils Halloween season

In time for Halloween, Image Comics' **Top Cow Productions** is declaring the entire month of October "Witchblade Month" to honor its latest rising star.

The month will be marked by the debut of a new Witchblade title—***Tales of the Witchblade***—and *Witchblade* #10 will serve as the springboard for **Marc Silvestri**'s newest project, ***The Darkness***, which teams Silvestri with writer **Garth Ennis** (*Preacher*). For more info on *The Darkness*, see "First Look" on page 50.

On the comics front, "Witchblade Month" marks, in addition to the regular *Witchblade* title, the launch of *Tales of the Witchblade*, a new monthly series spotlighting the Witchblade and the women who have worn it throughout history. As Top Cow founder and *Witchblade* co-creator Marc Silvestri explains, a regular creative team for the new title has yet to be officially named, although Top Cow is weighing the option of using guest creators to render each story arc. "Like *Witchblade*, we want to make sure that it's a top quality book, so you can guarantee that whoever is involved with it will be top-notch," he said.



Witchblade

Witchblade #10 marks the beginning of a brand new story-arc featuring the talents of regular creative team **David Wohl**, **Christina Z**, **Michael Turner** and **D-Tron**, whose earlier *Witchblade* stories will be released as a trade paperback boxed set in time for the October event.

And perhaps most exciting to Silvestri is the release of a Witchblade resin statue sculpted by **Clayburn Moore** (who also rendered Top Cow's Ripclaw statue) from a design by Michael Turner. Capping off the month with T-shirts, posters and Witchblade-themed Halloween contests, Silvestri hopes that readers will continue to realize that Sara Pezzini is not just another Bad Girl. "Witchblade differs a lot because she's empowered by herself and by this device. Even though she's an attractive woman, she's not empowered by what a lot of the Bad Girls' books are—and that's the size of her breasts," Silvestri said. "We get a lot of fan mail from readers who love Sara Pezzini—not just because she looks like she does, but because she really means something to them. And we want to stress that more and more with every book that we do." ■ *Scott Beatty*

Shi Meets DAREDEVIL in Winter X-Over

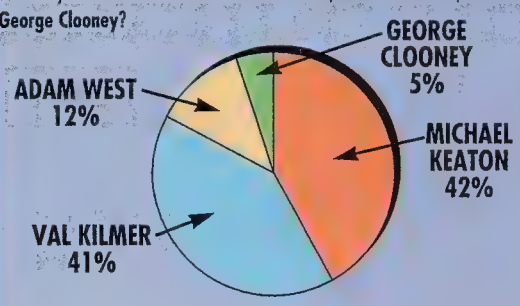
Come this winter, **Shi** meets another character that's no stranger to ninjas and codes of honor: Marvel's **Daredevil**.

Scheduled to be a two-issue crossover (one issue published by Crusade, one by Marvel), *Shi/Daredevil* is a natural pairing, according to Shi creator, **Billy Tucci**. Says Tucci, "They have a distinct similarity and that's captured in the crossover's title, 'Honor Thy Mother.' Shi's mother is a very religious and spiritual person, while Daredevil's is a Catholic nun. The story will play off of that."

While creative teams have not been settled upon, Tucci's dream scenario has the Shi team writing both issues, with art by either former *DD* artist **John Romita Jr.** or by *Shi* penciler Mitch Byrd. ■ *Victor Tayback*

Question of the Month

Holy Bat-polls! With all the commotion surrounding the fourth Batman movie lately (Clooney's in, then he's out, then he's in again...), we thought we'd get your opinions on the Caped Crusader. So we used our "Wizard World" forum on America Online to ask who your **favorite Batman** is: **Adam West, Michael Keaton, Val Kilmer** or **George Clooney?**



Proponents of Keaton said, "He looks wimpy compared to Kilmer, but conveyed the inner pain and intensity of Bruce Wayne very well. He had that gruff superhero voice and acted as if he had two lives: a rich one with life's pleasures and one full of revenge."

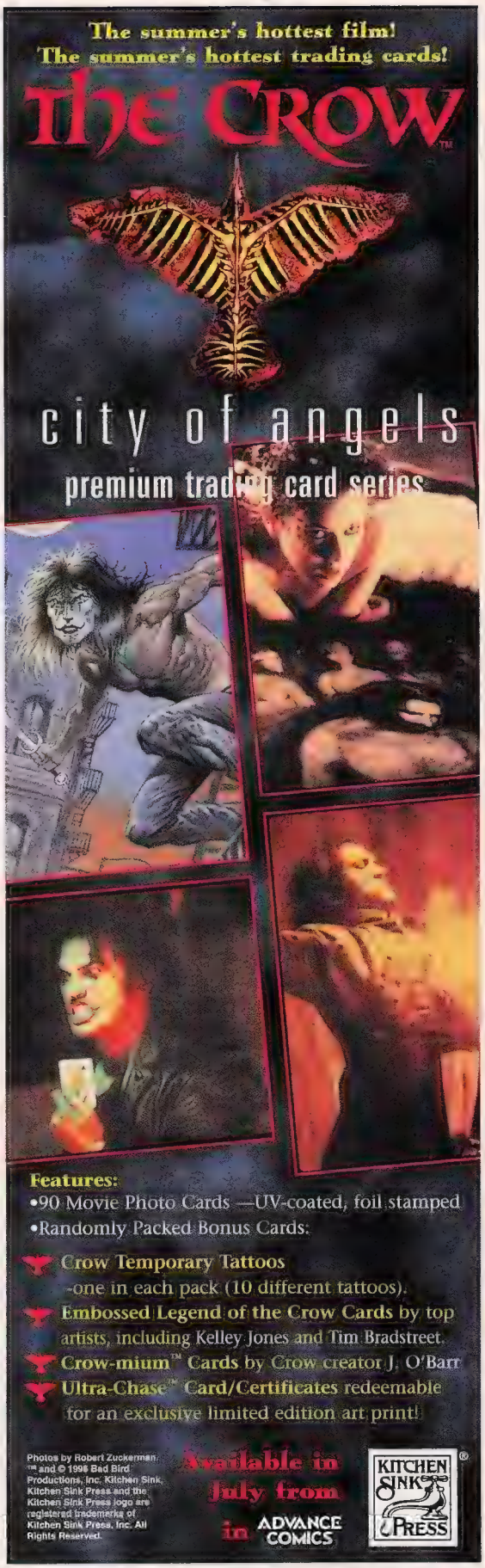
Kilmer definitely won the "cute and sexy" vote from our fans who thought he was the best Batman because "the other Batmans seemed to be too stiff when they were acting and Val made it somewhat funny. He also had the perfect voice, build and height."

While no one's even seen Clooney in a bat suit, he did manage to garner some fan support. As one fan said, "After seeing 'From Dusk Till Dawn,' Clooney will probably be better than both Keaton and Kilmer, because he looks like Wayne and can act cool, collect and driven."

And while Adam West garnered some fan support (As one fan put it, "He put socks in his underwear to make him look manlier."), some fans mentioned the animated series. "Kevin Conroy's the best because he captures more of the true essence of the Dark Knight in his voice work alone on 'Batman: The Animated Series,' than any of the others have done in live action."

We also asked the following Bat-questions:

- Which is your favorite Batman movie: 1989's "Batman" (44%), "Batman Forever" (37%), 1966's "Batman" (10%) or "Batman Returns" (9%)?
- Which previously unseen villain would you like to see in the fifth Batman film? Leading the pack with the most votes were Clayface, Scarecrow (Jeremy Irons, Jeff Goldblum), Bane, Killer Croc and Man-Bat. Other intriguing villains mentioned were Azrael, Mad Hatter (Tom Petty, Martin Short), Zsazz, Ra's al Ghul (Sean Connery), Hugo Strange, Maxie Zeus, Scarface, Black Mask and a Two-Face done right! ■ *Sorrell Booke*



Marvel Sees Green with Monster Hulk Push/Offensive

With a line of **Hulk** toys set for late 1996 release and an animated television series in the works, Marvel is preparing to make its big green money-making machine the center of a major storyline later this year. But it's not a revamp or an attempt to retool for the merchandising, says long-time *Hulk* writer **Peter David**; it's just a natural outgrowth of the story he's been telling all along.

"We don't have any particular plans to fit in," David said. "If you look at some of the merchandising, you'll see that it is keyed off what we're doing and have done. For example, there's a Mr. Fixit figure…and the last time we used Mr. Fixit was more than four years ago."

David said that the events of the latter half of 1996 in *Incredible Hulk* will all spin off the major stories occurring in the Marvel Universe—"**Onslaught**" and the subsequent "**Heroes Reborn**" deal that places the **Fantastic Four**, **Captain America**, **Iron Man** and the **Avengers** all into a "pocket world" controlled by the studios of **Jim Lee** and **Rob Liefeld**.

"All the general public in the Marvel Universe will know is there was a massive confrontation between virtually all of the heroes and Onslaught," David explained. "And when the dust settles, nearly everybody is gone—except the **X-Men** and the Hulk. The public will not be entirely sanguine about this: 'We get left with the Hulk?' If you thought there was hostility toward the Hulk before…

"And the Hulk reaches his breaking point. Up until now, when the Hulk was attacked, he'd simply defend himself. It's gone beyond that now. He is telling the world, 'You screw with me and I'll screw with you much worse,' " David continued. "A lot of the Hulk's calm human side will be going away; he won't be inarticulate and monosyllabic—that's not something I'd be interested in writing—but he is going to be a lot more, shall we say, *irritated*."

Don't screw with Hulk in '96

One last Hulk project set for release this year is the long-awaited **Hulk/Pitt** crossover, done in conjunction with David's former Hulk collaborator, **Dale Keown**. "I finished the first draft of the plot for *Hulk/Pitt* and then both Dale and [Editor] **Bobbie Chase** wanted some changes and it took me a while to get back to it," David admitted. "I finally did the rewrites and I just got a fax from Dale that says, 'I have three comments on the Hulk/Pitt crossover: I love it! I LOVE IT! *I LOVE IT*!' Based on that, I have to figure Dale is drawing it now—and we're looking at it being released late this year." ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

We Looked It Up

Oa (oh uh), *DC Universe*, n. 1 former homeworld of the Guardians, a race of powerful beings who created the Green Lantern Corps in order to protect the universe, but was recently destroyed in battle between former Green Lantern Hal Jordan and current GL Kyle Rayner 2 a onetime mosaic world composed of pieces of numerous other planets as part of an experiment 3 original source of Green Lantern's power 4 *Italian* [Colloq.] by the way, as a matter of fact

Tekno Unveils Neuro Jack One-Shot, Rating System

Big Entertainment has established its own in-house ratings system for mature readers' books published under its **Tekno•Comix** imprint and will be publishing a ***Neuro Jack*** one-shot in June, bringing the company's computer-generated hero to the printed page for the first time.

The new ratings system is designed to "help give our retailers, as well as our readers, a quick and more specific understanding of the content of each of our titles," said **Ed Polgardy**, Tekno's editor-in-chief. Three different graphic symbols are used to indicate the presence of "graphic violence," "mature language" or "mature situations" (read "sex").

The ratings will be applied on an issue-by-issue basis and the symbols first appeared on the March-released issues of ***Neil Gaiman's Lady Justice***, ***Neil Gaiman's Phage*** and ***Neil Gaiman's Wheel of Worlds***, each of which has often carried a "for mature readers" advisory in the past. The most prominent use of the new system to date, with all three warnings being employed, was on the ***From Dusk Till Dawn*** Deluxe Edition that shipped in May, a 64-page special edition offered only through the direct market.

"I tried to make sure that our adaptation captured the grotesque and horrific spirit of the movie," said Tekno Executive Editor James Chambers, who edited the Special. "Because of that, there's plenty of rough material in the book—blood, vampire strippers, exploding bodies, disembowelments—and the new ratings system is a means to alert everyone just what they are getting into."

Neuro Jack presumably becomes the first comics character to move from cyberspace to print. Created to promote the Tekno Forum on **Prodigy** (and later on The Microsoft Network), the online hero was the company's first published character, but his adventures have been restricted to cyberspace…until now.

Jack Brunner was a scientist who transformed his consciousness into cyberspace in order to fake his own death after deciding he could no longer work for the evil forces that employed him. Once there, he discovered a link between the Net and alien races, and became the prey of electronic hunters bent on erasing him forever.

The 32-page Special will be written by former Tekno editor James Chambers and feature computerized artwork by staffer Erika Taguchi. ■ *Jack Curtin*

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DC's World Ends in 'Darkest Night'

Okay hero, pop quiz time. The world ends tomorrow. What do you do? That's a question that everyone in the **DC Universe** will have to ask themselves this September during "**Darkest Night**," DC's fall crossover event. The premise for the four-issue weekly crossover is that Earth's sun goes out, and try as they might, the heroes can't do anything to save the Earth.

"The sun goes out for reasons linked to past, current and future DC continuity," *Darkest Night* editor **Dan Thorsland** revealed. "The Earth begins to freeze over, and despite everything the superheroes do, they can't restart the sun. This may or may not be the 'great cataclysm' that is mentioned in the **Legion of Super-Heroes** books, where Earth's recorded history is erased and, therefore, the Legion is confused about 20th-Century Earth."

The brainchild of **Karl Kesel** and **Stuart Immonen**, who will respectively write and pencil the core mini-series, *Darkest Night* promises to force DC's heroes to look at their lives like never before. The main story will occur in the four weekly issues, while all of September's DC Universe books will reflect each character's personal response to the cataclysm, and a **Green Lantern** related one-shot will tie up loose ends hanging in the balance. Each hero will respond in different ways to the impending end of the world. Some will act out revenge, others may act on romantic impulses, while still others may be tempted to just leave Earth behind.

Thorsland promised that the mini-series will be fun, dramatic and, emotionally, very moving. "There are scenes that can really get you choked up when the heroes realize, by the third week of the series, that there is nothing they can do," Thorsland said. "For all their powers, the universe can still make anyone feel infinitesimal. One scene that got me is between **Superman** and **Batman**. Superman gets his powers from the sun, so he's really huffing and puffing, working with no sunlight. Batman realizes this, and is visibly shaken. That's powerful stuff."

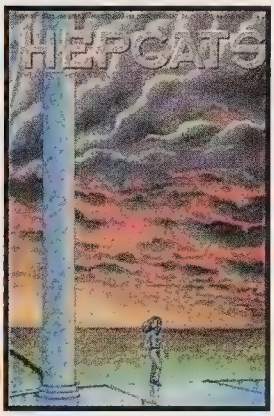
Thorsland also promised that readers will be able to fully enjoy the mini-series without shelling out major coin and buying all the crossover books. "We're looking to tell a really big story, but not take a big bite out of anybody's wallet," he said.

The four 22-page issues of *Darkest Night* will ship weekly beginning in early September. ■ *Matt Brady*

HEPCATS GOES MONTHLY WITH NEW PUBLISHER

Martin Wagner's ***Hepcats***, a cult-favorite, self-published comic that has been plagued by an irregular publishing schedule since its first issue appeared in the summer of 1989, has joined the **Antarctic Press** fold.

"I announced last year that I was going to publish only in graphic novel format in the future," Wagner said, "but with all the changes in the distribution system, I have to admit I really didn't see how I was going to pull that off. I was on the verge of packing it in when Antarctic contacted me."



Joe Dunn, vice-president of Antarctic, said, "We [he and brother Ben, Antarctic's president] are both big fans of *Hepcats* and decided to approach Martin to see if we couldn't be of some help. It's still very much his comic—he retains complete creative control—but with our financial backing and distributor support, he can now get the book out on a regular basis and reach the audience he deserves."

Hepcats will relaunch with a special ashcan edition at the San Diego Comic Con International during the Fourth of July weekend and then debut officially with a full-color #0 issue in November, containing all-new material. "It's a day-in-the-life sort of story," said Wagner, "to reintroduce the characters for current readers and provide a jumping on point for new ones." Thereafter, starting in December, Antarctic will republish the previously released 12 black-and-white issues on a monthly basis, leading up to a brand new *Hepcats* #13 in December 1997. Wagner will produce a new backup storyline that will run through the reprinted issues and be collected in a single volume in 1998 for current readers who choose not to buy the re-released editions.

Hepcats is the story of roommates Joey and Gunther, their friend Arnie and his fiancée Erica (the characters are anthropomorphicized because *Hepcats* started as a daily strip at the University of Texas in 1987, satirizing college mascots). The current storyline, "Snowblind," focusing on Erica and her dark past of abuse and family strife, is scheduled to be completed in issue #20. "I'll take a brief hiatus at that point," said Wagner, "then begin a story called 'Way of the World,' which is all about Joey and his crisis of identity. The backup stories in the new version of #1-#12 are actually a prologue to that story." ■ *Jack Curtin*

BUZZ BOX

The inside scoop on the comic industry

• Did you catch **Freefall**'s guest appearance in ***Atomik Angels*** #1? And does it mean an Atomik Angels crossover with **Gen**[13] is far behind?

• **Garth Ennis** (*Preacher, Hitman*) is reportedly slated to take over ***WildC.A.T.s*** with **Alan Moore**'s departure later this year. Spokespersons for WildStorm were unavailable for comment at press time.

• **Todd McFarlane** has announced in addition to his spin-off title ***Curse of Spawn*** slated for later this year, that he intends to start producing higher-end, painted graphic novels, the first of which will involve **Mike Grell**. It is unknown at press time whether this means **Spawn** and/or other characters will be involved.

• Insiders report that a **Spider-Man/Gen**[13] team-up book may be in the works, with artist **Joe Madureira** possibly handling the project.

•The much-rumored George Pérez teamup with Rob Liefeld on *The Avengers* "Heroes Reborn" project won't happen, sources indicate. No word on who has the inside track to draw *The Avengers*.

• Industry sources indicate that former X-writer **Fabian Nicieza** will be named **Acclaim Comics**' editor-in-chief and will helm the revitalization of Acclaim characters this fall. Also reportedly on board to write the books are **Mark Waid** (on ***X-O Manowar***) and **Kurt Busiek** (on ***Ninjak***). More news as it comes.

• **Witchblade** teaming up with **Ghost Rider**? How 'bout **Elektra** vs. **Cyblade**? It could happen. Buzz hears **Marvel** and **Marc Silvestri** are gearing up for a winter crossover between companies, though neither company will confirm such reports.

FIRE

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Garney Hangs 10 on Silver Surfer

"I definitely want to do something between what Moebius did," said upcoming ***Silver Surfer*** penciler **Ron Garney**, "and what Jack Kirby did. They had this real alien take on the Silver Surfer that I thought was real cool and interesting."

Garney, most recently the penciler on ***Captain America***, found himself out of work when the living legend of World War II went west to **Rob Liefeld**'s Extreme Studios as part of the "**Heroes Reborn**" deal. But executive editor **Mark Gruenwald** offered Garney—under contract and full of ideas—the sentinel of the spaceways. "I am sad that I am losing Cap, because that was my first choice, but now I am getting to do my second. I have always wanted to do the Silver Surfer," Garney admitted, "so I think that it's going to be a lot of fun. Visually, I think that he can be really very interesting. There is such a mystique about him."

George Pérez came on as writer of *Silver Surfer* as of issue #111.

"My challenge to George," said Gruenwald, "was to give me some Silver Surfer stories that I haven't seen. Take him to places that he hasn't been.

"Space is vast, space is infinite. How come he keeps running into the same bunch of guys—Galactus and Thanos and ex-heralds of Galactus? Make him 'boldly go.' So George gave me that."

Garney isn't the only new member of the shiny guy's team. "Everybody but George is new on the book," Gruenwald pointed out. "It will be Ron and a new inker, who has yet to be decided." John Costanza will be lettering, while "one of George's personal favorites" Tom Smith will be coloring. Artist **Tom Grindberg**'s last issue was #116; Garney will start with #123 shipping in October. In the interim, penciling chores are in the hands of **Scot Eaton**.

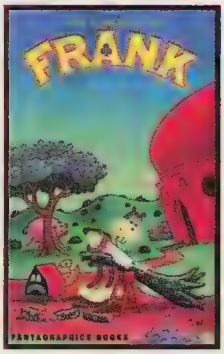
And will Garney's take on the character go as swimmingly? "I kind of want to make him look a little more alien than he is now," Garney said. "Just something in his facial features, maybe something in the length of his limbs. I mean, I'm still playing around with the sketches." (Check out Garney's take on the Surfer in this issue's poster centerfold!)

Chuckled Garney, "I haven't even sat down at the table with Mark to discuss all the details yet. We're supposed to get together, sit down and talk about where we want to go, and you know, I haven't even really signed on yet.

"So it's pretty much a go, and 99 percent there." ■ *Ruth Morrison*

Twenty Years of FANTAGRAPHICS

In July 1976, **Kim Thompson** and **Gary Groth** started a new publishing company with a magazine of comics news and criticism called ***The Comics Journal***. Two decades later, the *Journal* is still raising eyebrows and tempers with its often controversial editorial posture, and **Fantagraphics** has become a major alternative voice in a superhero-dominated genre, publishing such books as ***Love & Rockets***, ***Usagi Yojimbo***, ***Hate*** and ***Eightball***.



In an industry that has seen so many other publishers go under in recent years, Fantagraphics' survival is a significant accomplishment. Groth attributes that survival to "sheer tenacity and pig-headedness. We just refuse to go away."

"Our greatest strength is in the consistency of our editorial vision," Groth proclaimed. "We've never compromised that. Periodically, we've done projects that were solely geared to make money, but we never stopped publishing the kind of books that we believed in."

His biggest disappointment? "The kind of comics we publish, which are more ambitious and literate than your average mainstream comics, still have not achieved the broad readership that we would like to see," he answered. "The number of readers is minuscule in a country of 260 million people."

July will see the debut of two new series by *Love & Rockets* creators **Jaime and Gilbert Hernandez**—***Whoa, Nellie!*** and ***New Love***, respectively—and a new series by **Jim Woodring**, featuring his critically acclaimed character Frank. ■ *Paul J. Grant*

VIRTUAL COMICS INTRODUCES TRUE CYBERCOMICS

Virtual Comics, publisher **Byron Priess**' comics publishing entity, has introduced a new line of comics completely accessible on the World Wide Web.

Virtual's line of comics will be available in two versions: one for the Web and the other a standard newsstand variety. The Web version is accessible at URL address, http://www.virtualcomics.com, and requires Netscape 2.0 or Microsoft Internet Explorer for viewing. The comics are displayed right on your computer screen in the standard 256 colors, or optionally thousands of colors for those of you with graphics cards.

The first wave of Virtual Comics includes ***They Call Me Skul***, ***The Six***, ***The Suit*** and ***Stan Lee's Riftworld***. Virtual Comics' creative talent includes such notables as **Ron Lim** (*Silver Surfer*), **D.G. Chichester** (*Daredevil*), **Dave Gibbons** (*Give Me Liberty*), Greg Luzniak and Marvel founding father Stan Lee. Each comic is produced in the traditional manner, on bristol board with pen and ink, and then transcribed onto the computer screen, where it is digitally colored by color separation shop Digital Chameleon.

Danny Fingeroth, former group editor of the **Spider-Man** line at **Marvel Comics**, is the editor-in-chief of Virtual Comics. "I was at Marvel Comics for 18 years. When the opportunity came up to be the editor-in-chief at Virtual Comics, I decided to take the leap into cyberspace," said Fingeroth. "In the future, people will be getting their comics directly through their home computers."

Discriminating comics buyers may want to know: What's different about a cybercomic? To begin with, Virtual Comics provides interactive features in each of its comics. Say you want to know more about the Skul's secret lair or the headquarters of The Six. Just click on the appropriate button and a link takes you momentarily away from the story to see schematics, origin stories and other tidbits related to the comic you're reading.

"Each comic is navigable in 3-D space," said Fingeroth. Much like ***Myst***, or similar computer games, the reader will be able to "move around" in the world of the Virtual Comics characters. Fingeroth concedes that all the glitz only works if there's solid art and writing behind it. "If you don't have stories and characters who live and breathe, then all the electronics and multimedia is for naught," he noted.

Virtual comics are available online for $1.99 each. Purchase allows you to view the comic online and download it, provided you have approximately 4 MB of hard drive space to put it in. Printed versions are available separately. ■ *Christopher Griffen*

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BYTE THIS!

Comics' golden-boy scribe **Mark Waid** gets digitally intimate with "Wizard World" users on June 13 at 8:00-8:45 p.m. (EST).

One of comics' true founding fathers, **Will Eisner**, joins "Wizard World" online on July 11 at 9:00-9:45 p.m. (EST). Take this rare opportunity to talk to one of comics' true artistic and spiritual leaders.

Wanna be in comics? Acclaim writer/artist **Mark Moretti** hosts "Wizard World" 's "Breaking In" chatroom every other Thursday 8:00-9:00 p.m. (EST). Mark's professional guests to be announced.

Aspiring writers should join "Wizard World" 's Creative Writing Club. Exchange ideas and polish your writing skills. This club and all the others are located in the "Wizard World" Message Boards.

To hook up to "Wizard World" on America Online, call 800-754-4400. They'll send you free software and 10 hours free online. Keyword: Wizard.

Also, check out "Wizard World" on the World Wide Web at http://www.wizardpress.com.

"Wizard World" 's Chat Schedules for the Special Events Room

MONDAY

- **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**

Time: 7-8 p.m. (EST)

- **Manga/Anime**

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

- **WildStorm & Top Cow Chat** (alternating Mondays)

Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST)

TUESDAY

- **Wizard Unplugged with *Wizard*'s Editors**

Time: 6-7 p.m. (EST)

Featuring: *Wizard* Editors Online: Pat McCallum, Andrew Kardon and Brian Cunningham

- **Fantastic Four Club**

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

WEDNESDAY

- **Asteriod X Club (X-Men)**

Time: 6-7 p.m. (EST)

- **Crusade Comics Chat** (alternating Wednesdays)

Time: 7-8 p.m. (EST)

- **Stump Steve** (trivia and stuff on alternating Wednesdays)

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

Featuring: *Wizard* Designer Steve Blackwell

- **Avengers Assemble**

Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST)

THURSDAY

- **InQuest Chat**

Time: 6-7 p.m. (EST)

Featuring: *InQuest* writers Rick Moscatello and Wil Chase

- **Breaking In** (alternating Thursdays)

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

Featuring: Mark Moretti

- **Manga/Anime**

Time: 12-1 a.m. (EST)

FRIDAY

- **LOOP** (Legion of OverPower, Marvel CCG)

Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST)

SUNDAY

- **Sandman100 Comic Book Chat**

Time: 8-10 p.m. (EST)

Featuring: Don Lisk

■ *Buddy Scalera*

company updates

ABSTRACT STUDIO

July's Molly and Tex are what will now be cancelled as *Sunnyside of Paradise* #34, the last issue of the current series. From there on, the series will relaunch with Homage Comics (see listing on page 25).

ACCLAIM COMICS

Sliders Special #1 is written by "Sliders" one jerry B Cornell (Quinn Mallory). This story, set late in July, tells of a world where J. Edgar Hoover decided to legalize drug use in the U.S. ... July sees the release of the *Armor & Dungeons* comic paperback, collecting the first three issues series in one $8.95 volume.

BIG ENTERTAINMENT

Neuro Jack, a 32 page special one-shot shipping in June, brings the computer-generated hero need to prominent TitanOtanna pulse to the printed page. It stars a man who travels through the electronic world other his body's immigrated.

BONEYARD PRESS

Kicking off its five year anniversary, Boneyard is releasing a new anthology in June. *Crime Pays* #1, a black and white 64 page book with an ink and a $2.95 cover price, offers four stories and is not intended for children.

CHAOS COMICS

Issues of the *Lady Death* II/2 offer available in *Wizard* #69 where *Lady Death: The Crucible* II/2, the official Chaos! Comics introduction to the new lady Death mini series ... *Purgatori: The Vengeance Myth* ($2.50) is a three issue mini-series, debuts in July and features the artistic talents of Joe Bishop (*Conquerors*, *Dark Angel*) along with cover artist/writer Brian Pulido. For more information, see our review in "Wizard Wire."

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

An update in the Phoenix Comics case: In early April, the four felony and six misdemeanor charges against Oklahoma retailer Michael Kennedy and John Evans were reduced to six misdemeanor counts, including the dropping of the felony charge of child pornography charge. However, the state filed an appeal that might reinstate these other felony charges.

CRUSADE ENTERTAINMENT

After a two-issue absence, Billy Tucci returns in particular in his *The Day of the Warrior* #1 ($2.95) in July, heading into the book's conclusion with issue #12. He will continue with the *Heaven and Earth* mini-series in early '97 ... *Dreamscape* #1 ($2.95), a four issue mini-series, debuts in July written by Christopher Golden and drawn by Albert Deberon.

DARK HORSE COMICS

Congrats to Dark Horse and the creators of *Star Wars: Dark Empire* II for being placed on the 1996 list of Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers. The list is compiled by The Young Adult Library Services Association and the American Library Association.

DC COMICS

Robin will finally meet Superboy in a two issue Prestige Format series by year's end, courtesy of co-writers Karl Kesel and Chuck Dixon, who are by coincidence who I no stranger to either character. Tom Grummett ... A new Wonder Girl debuts in *Wonder Woman* #111, shipping May 29 ... DC has announced that in addition to writer Scott McDaniel, the first six issues of forthcoming *Superman Adventures* (based on the upcoming cartoon series) will feature artwork by Rick Burchett and Terry Austin, with inkspots Mark Farmer and Mark Saraceno on colors.

EL CAPITÁN

For all you *Stray Bullets* readers out there who were not able to get your hands

on any of the first seven issues, it's time to rejoice. The *Collected Stray Bullets* is due in stores the first week of July. It's an oversized 9" by 11" hardcover (the original art was blown up to size) that contains the first seven stories plus 20 complemental pages of David Lapham and cost behind the scenes. It sports a $29.95 cover price and a new cover by Lapham.

ENTITY COMICS

Two new versions of *Aster #1* are on the way. For $14.95, you can pick up a copy of the *Aster Vol. 1 #1 Signed & Numbered Edition* after June 7. This book is autographed on the front cover by writers Kanaue and Narciso Roxas and artist Oliver Isabedra, but it features a new cover by Joe Lee (who is not signing the books). Go figure. Only 500 of these bad boys are being made, with a Letter of Authenticity, no less. The second version, called the Special Gold Edition, is exactly the same as the signed edition, except it has gold foil on the cover and a retail price of $19.95, and is limited to only 600 copies. ... Trent Kanuga (*Creed*) is drawing a variant cover for *Vortex: The Second Coming #4*, due out in June.

EVENT COMICS

Catch the *Kid Death & Fluffy Spring Break Special* in June. It features the damage-doing duo's first full-length story, written by Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti, and drawn by *Beavis & Butt-Head*'s Rick Parker. ... *Ash: The Fire Within #2* is due in July, and features two pin-ups by famous painter Saverio Tenuta.

HARRIS COMICS

Check out the *Vampirella 25th Anniversary Special* this October. Featuring a gorgeous Frank Frazetta cover. This anthology will feature new Vampi tales from Mark Texeira, Michael Bair, Amanda Conner, Warren Ellis, Rudy Nebres, Kevin Nowlan, Jimmy Palmiotti, James Robinson and more. ... After her friends are killed, Vampi reaches her breaking point and decides she must take down Nyx in July's *Vampirella: Death and Destruction #1*. With interior art by Amanda Conner and Jimmy Palmiotti, it features a Billy Tucci cover.

HIGH IMPACT STUDIOS

In July, *Double Impact #1* (kicking off a new volume) is coming your way. This issue sports a chromium cover and features art from Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti.

HOMAGE COMICS

Jim Lee will be drawing a five-page dream sequence in August's *Strangers in Paradise* (vol. 3) #1, published by Homage Comics. ... Joining *Astro City* and *Strangers in Paradise* in the Homage Comics stable is *Leave it to Chance*, by writer James Robinson (*The Golden Age*, *Wild C.A.T.s*) and artist Paul Smith (*Uncanny X-Men*, *The Golden Age*). Kicking off in July, this mini-series stars Chance Falconer, the 14-year-old daughter of an occult investigator and guardian of the city of Devil's Echo. Said Robinson, "It presents a positive female role model, but in a world full of high drama and dark shadows, with enough crime, horror and fantasy to appeal to everyone." ... Astro City comes to *Wizard* two issues in a row. Look for an Astro City contest celebrating its move to Homage Comics in *Wizard #61* and an *Astro City #1/2* offer in *Wizard #62*.

IMAGE COMICS

• CARTOON BOOKS

August sees the release of the Bone Mobile! No, it's not a car, silly. It's a cool, full-color mobile that you hang from the ceiling with wire. Retailing for $24.95, it features all your favorites, including the rat creatures, Lucius and the Bone family. ... September sees Cartoon Books' first Bone calendar. ... And coming to shops in November is the Dragon statue from Graphan Designs. Since it's being done to scale, Cartoon Books spokesperson Karen Root claimed, "It's as big as a cat!" Sounds neat!

• EXTREME STUDIOS

Youngblood and X-Force unite in July, as Image's superteam collides with Marvel's mutant commandos, featuring cameo appearances by dozens of characters from both the Image and Marvel Universes. The book will be 48 pages and prestige-bound with a variant cover by Rob Liefeld, and will feature the talents of Eric Stephenson, Roger Cruz and Danny Miki. ... July's *Youngblood #10* ($2.50) is a Youngblood/X-Force tie-in. ... Alan Moore takes over the writing reins of *Supreme* as of issue #40.

• HIGHBROW ENTERTAINMENT

July's *A Distant Soil #15*, the first Image issue, offers a perfect jumping-on point for new readers, as Jason is recruited by an underground movement that plans to destroy the Avatar. It features a hand-painted cover by Colleen Doran, and an *ADS* sketchbook, all for $2.95. ... Starting with *ADS #1* (fourth printing) and #12 in June, Doran's Aria Press will be resoliciting its back issues through comic distributors. This may be your first chance to pick up these books!

• TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS

As he fights his way through Hell, Spawn gets some help from the Savage Dragon in *Spawn #52*.

• TOP COW PRODUCTIONS

Billy Tucci's Tomoe will guest-star in *Witchblade #9*, following up on the Sha Cyblade crossover from last year. *Spawn* artist Tony Daniel and Kevin Conrad will illustrate the issue, shipping in August. One out of every four issues will feature a special alternate cover by Michael Turner and D-Tron. The regular *Witchblade* illustrative team

continued on page 26

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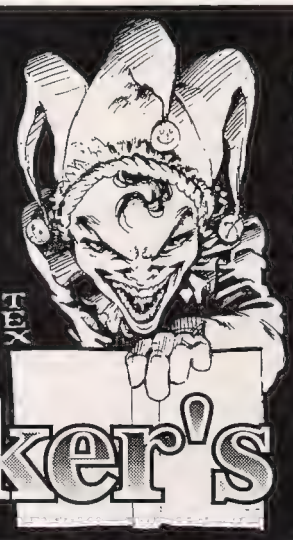

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NEWS BITES

Batman Stalks the Web

DC Comics claims that its recent two-month long release of five pages weekly from ***Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight*** #83 and #84 on its World Wide Web site (http://www.dccomics.com) was the first electronic serialization in comics history.

The project began in mid-April, with one page of the two-part "Infected" storyline (written by **Warren Ellis** and illustrated by **John McCrea**) being uploaded in order Monday through Friday and remaining available for two days. Two story pages and the cover were online at any point. The books themselves appeared in stores shortly after the first few pages of each issue were previewed electronically. ■ *Jack Curtin*

French Comic Hits U.S.

Fantasy Flight Publishing, which specializes in U.S. editions of popular European comics, will bring the French ***Valerian—Spatiotemporal Agent*** to these shores beginning in July. The science-fiction, space opera, time-travel series will be published in standard U.S.-comics format at a cover price of $2.95. ■ *PDO*

Do You Have the Write Stuff?

Looking for your break as a comics writer? **Old Town Comics**, publishers of ***Dr. Wonder***, may have your opening, by bringing back a tradition of comics in the 1940s and '50s—the text story. Old Town is looking for sci-fi, fantasy or horror stories of 750 to 1500 words in length, preferably with a twist ending. For more info, contact Old Town at oldtownpub@aol.com or 102635.2723@compuserve.com. If you prefer "real" mail, write them at Dr. Wonder Text Stories, Old Town Publishing, PO Box 447E, Franklin Square, NY 11010. ■ *PDO*

Planet Comics Update

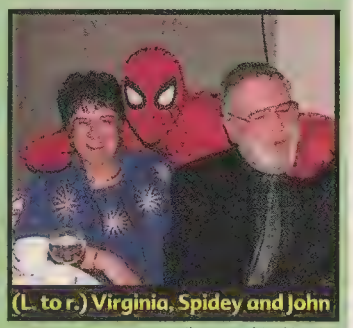
Judge Larry Jones of the District Court of Oklahoma County, determined on April 12 that the materials seized during the **Planet Comics** store raid did not warrant felony charges. Judge Jones subsequently ruled that the felony charges against the owners of Planet Comics were not proper and reduced three of the counts which were previously felonies to misdemeanors. The three misdemeanor charges of displaying material harmful to minors remained intact. The felony charges of possession of child pornography were dropped by the State moments before the defense's motion to dismiss was to be heard. In short, the charges went from four felonies and three misdemeanors to six misdemeanor counts. Three of those counts do not call for imprisonment. However, the State of Oklahoma is seeking to reinstate three of the felony charges—two counts of trafficking in obscenity and one count of keeping for sale obscene material. ■ *PDO*

Romitas Honored For Longtime Service

Yet another chapter of **Marvel Comics** history closed on March 30 at a reception at The Manhattan Penthouse. A retirement party for married couple and Marvel mainstays **John** and **Virginia Romita** was held. John Romita was a longtime Marvel artist and later served as the company's Art Director. Virginia Romita was the publisher's first-ever Traffic Manager, serving in that capacity since the early 1970s.

Marvel Editor **Mark Gruenwald** emceed the event, which included speeches from **Mike Carlin**, **Chris Claremont**, **Al Milgrom** and the Romitas' oldest son, Victor. John and Virginia were both hailed and lightly ribbed for their years of service. Many speakers referred to Virginia's tight enforcement of deadlines, and much fun was had at the expense of Marvel's open secret that due to his tight, clean and consistent style, John redrew many characters' faces on covers all through the '70s.

When asked how they are going to spend their retirement, the couple responded that they were going to spend time with family and not ever worry about deadlines again. ■ *Jim McLauchlin* W



(L. to r.) Virginia, Spidey and John

Photo courtesy of Marvel Comics Ent.

company updates

continued from page 25

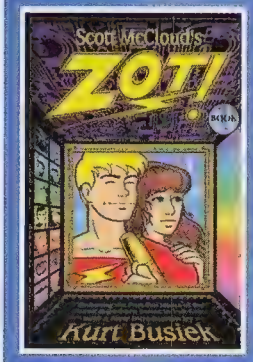
returns with issue #10. ... Event Comics' popular *Darkline Ash* will pass one to *Cyberframe #2*, shipping in September, and Ash readers Joe Lansdale and Jimmy Palmiotti will be supplying an alternate cover to the issue.

• WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS

Terry Moore (*Strangers in Paradise*) will be writing a "Sci-Fi" mini-series with Tommy Lee Edwards (*Gen*[13]/*Maxx*) heading up the list of potential artists for the series. ... WildStorm Direct, a new division of WildStorm Productions, will specialize in making WildStorm-related comics, artwork and other neat stuff available directly to the consumer. In order minimizing wild retailers who may be selling the same merchandise, store owners will have a three-month exclusivity period on all items before they appear in the currently-in-production catalog.

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

July sees the release of *The Crow: City of Angels #1*, a three-part adaptation of the new "Crow" film from Dimension Films in August. ... The first 13 issues of Scott McCloud's 1980s comic series *Zot!* will be collected in full color this July in *Zot! Book One*. This 288-page trade paperback, featuring an intro by Kurt Busiek, retails for $29.95. Three more volumes will be released in the future, collecting the entire series. ... Spend your summer with monkeys! KSP will be releasing a line of merchandise based on the "12 Monkeys" film (out on video now), this year's mounting T-shirts, one and a coffee mug with a screaming monkey that appears when the mug is filled with hot liquid.



LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS

The biggest comic launch in London Night's history happens this year, when "Dark Fall" brings to several major creators and artistic many new books. Writer David Quinn (*Doctor Strange, Lonnage*) will write an all-new *Razor* monthly, which will reshape the heroine.

MARVEL COMICS

The next two ongoing 99-cent books to be released will be *Marvel Fanfare*, which will spotlight Marvel's brightest heroes (the title's predecessor was canceled four years ago), and *Origins*, which features self-contained origins of Marvel heroes in the popular animation style. Both launch in July. ... Look for the trade paperback *Captain America: Operation Rebirth* ($9.95), collecting the first story arc by Mark Waid and Ron Garney. ... The X-Men work of Neal Adams is packaged in the *X-Men Visionaries: Neal Adams Collection* trade paperback ($24.95), shipping in July. It features state-of-the-art re-coloring and re-separations, 208 pages and an Adams cover.

MAXIMUM PRESS

The *Avengelyne Deluxe Trade Paperback* ($19.95) reprints all of the Avengelyne mini-series (the original three issues, plus the three-issue *Avengelyne: Chaos* series and the two issues of *Avengelyne: Deadly Sins*). It also features a special sketchbook section, a behind-the-scenes look at the production of the Avengelyne comic and a foldout cover.

POWDER MONKEY PRESS

Former *Shrinker* Harvey Mendelsohn is writing and drawing his *Emma and the Pirate Twins*, done in a manga style. The first issue drops in October.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

July kicks off the full-color *Animal Mystic Wars* mini-series, written and drawn by series creator The Dark One. ... Also in July is the Poison Girls Limited Edition Portfolio Volume One, with eight color photos painted, signed and numbered by series creator Drew Hayes. (Fans can catch the original art at this year's San Diego Comic Con on the July 4th weekend.)

TOPPS COMICS

The X-Files: Season One #1 ships in July. This series adapts the episodes of the first season of "The X-Files" TV show, the first issue presents episode One, titled "Deep Throat." ... Kevin J. Anderson, writer of the X-Files hardcover *Ground Zero*, returns to write *The X-Files #20*, shipping in July.

TOP COW™

THE GRASS IS GREENER ON THIS SIDE.

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CAUGHT IN THE NEXUS

AFTER 15 YEARS OF NEXUS, STEVE RUDE AND MIKE BARON UNVEIL AN AGRESSIVE PUBLISHING SCHEDULE... AND A NEW NEMESIS

BY CRAIG SHUTT

Mike Baron and Steve Rude oughta be committed. To Nexus, that is. And they are.

Hot on the heels of their *Nexus Meets Madman* special in May comes *Nexus: Executioner's Song*, a six-issue series starting in June that the two vow begins their commitment to produce at least six issues every year. To reaffirm that pledge—and as a quirky way to celebrate the character's 15th anniversary this year—the issues of the mini-series will be numbered as if they are continuing from the ongoing series that began in 1981. (That means, counting assorted mini-series, *Executioner's Song* will technically begin as *Nexus* vol. 2 #89.)

"It's really hurt our profile in the comics community to come out so sporadically," admits Baron. "A lot of readers we pick up with each appearance don't realize that this is a continuing character."

For those who may have forgotten, Nexus is actually a guy named Horatio Hellpop, the protector of the refugee planet Ylum, which is just teeming with alien species. Nexus' powers, including nigh-invulnerability and fusion blasts, are derived from the Merk, an alien race that imbued him with these gifts during childhood. In return, the Merk forced Hellpop to hunt down human mass murderers. If he didn't, Hellpop was forced to suffer truly horrific dreams that would ultimately kill him.

Nexus began 15 years ago at Capital Comics, when the publisher asked Baron and Rude to create a superhero. After nine issues, the book moved to First Comics, where some 80 issues followed (though not all penciled by Rude). When First went out of business in 1991, the character languished until 1992, when Dark Horse purchased the rights and returned them to Baron and Rude. That's led to sporadic Baron/Rude mini-series and offshoots by Baron and other artists.

"This is the most intense storyline we've done, and it becomes increasingly intense in each issue," Baron explains of *Executioner's Song*. More importantly, Rude adds, the issues are self-contained. "These stories are instantly accessible to new readers and won't bog anyone down," he promises. "Every question the reader has will be answered."

One key subplot runs through the first four issues: Ylum is sponsoring the Olympics under the direction of Sundra Peale, Nexus' lover. This gathers steam as each issue focuses on other events.

The first issue, "Dark Side of the Moon," begins with the desecration of the graves of Nexus' parents. This draws Hellpop to a past he'd rather forget, since the Merk forced him to kill his own father, who had destroyed a fully inhabited planet. Also showing up is Michana Loomis, an evil young girl who wields Nexus' power. She's not what you'd call one of Nexus' friends, however, seeing as how her father was one of Hellpop's targets.

The second story, called "Old Guard," features Nexus in a conflict of conscience, as he decides whether to confront the old Sov generals he blames for his father's actions.

In "Negative," the third issue, Nexus encounters his direct opposite: a being with his powers who believes that capital punishment can't be justified. "He'll stop at nothing to prevent Nexus from carrying out his executions," Baron says. "It's the most intense story and introduces a powerful character who's going to be around for a while."

The arc's final issue, "Sunny Day," focuses on Sundra and the Olympics. "It's pretty frenetic," Baron says. "We'll see how she copes with everything, with a lot of action and humor thrown in."

The final two issues will form a two-part arc that may be delayed after the first four, Baron says, to space out the run (and no doubt gauge sales).

Even after 15 years, though, the two aren't running dry, they say. "We'll always have stories to tell," Rude says. "As *Nexus* evolves, I find it reflects things I'm wrestling with in my own life. The older I get, the more cynical I get." And Baron chimes in, "While I'm becoming more optimistic."

"We had no idea it would last this long when we started," Baron admits. "And there was no way I thought I'd be able to say honestly that I'd be doing my best stuff now. But that's what's happened."

Craig Shutt, who got the scoop on Kingdom Come *last issue, is instantly accessible to new readers and won't bog anyone down.*

Wizard *casts the Fantastic Four movie!*

Casting call 17

With all the hoopla about Jim Lee drawing *Fantastic Four*, it stands to reason that a good FF movie should be in the works. (As many might remember, there was a low-budget, god-awful FF movie made, but never released, about two years ago.) So who would we cast as the fateful four that get bombarded by cosmic rays, as well as their supporting cast and villains? Follow us, and we'll show you...

INVISIBLE WOMAN

We confess: Sue Richards was tough to cast. After going through numerous possibilities, Gail O'Grady ("NYPD Blue") won out. And we think she's perfect when not dressed like a gaudy '70s nightmare.

MR. FANTASTIC

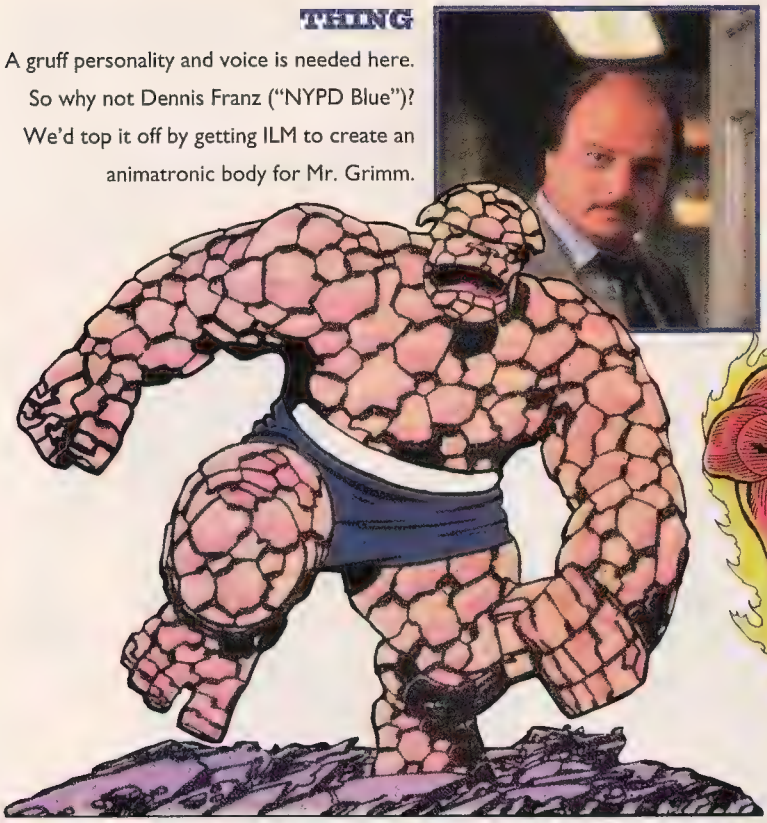
Mark Harmon is a shoo-in as Reed Richards, leader of the FF. (Just forget about "Summer School," "The Presidio" and any other bomb he made, and think about his time on "St. Elsewhere.")

By a bunch of *Wizard* staffers

All photos Everett Collection, unless otherwise noted.

THING

A gruff personality and voice is needed here. So why not Dennis Franz ("NYPD Blue")? We'd top it off by getting ILM to create an animatronic body for Mr. Grimm.



HUMAN TORCH

Let's face it: Mark-Paul Gosselaar ("Saved by the Bell") is a dopey teen actor. And for Johnny Storm, we need a dopey teen actor. Who else could pull off yelling "Flame On!" with a straight face?

DR. DOOM

Jeremy Irons ("Die Hard with a Vengeance") would be perfectly evil as Victor Von Doom. He's got a cool accent and everything.

FRANKLIN RICHARDS

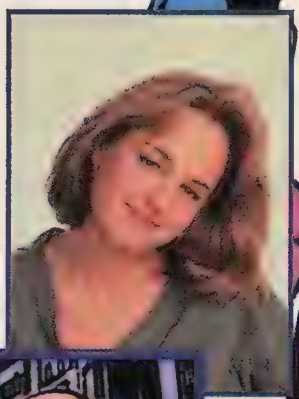
For our flick we'll use the "good" Franklin that's roughly 4 years old. That said, we're casting Brian Bonsall ("*Family Ties*," "*Star Trek: The Next Generation*," "*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*").

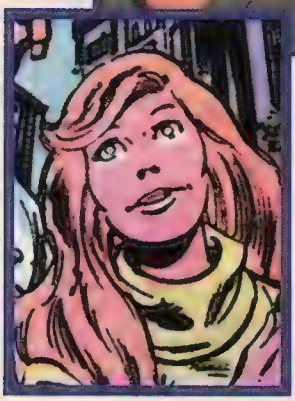
GALACTUS

"Galactuz huz an offuh yuh cuhn't refyoose." Okay, so Marlon Brando ("The Godfather," "Don Juan DeMarco") won't be talking like that. He'll have his distinctive booming voice while eating planets and stuff.

SILVER SURFER

Robert Patrick was already kinda silvery in "Terminator 2" (thanks to top-notch special effects) and can act kinda like an introspective type. So why not combine the two for this Zenn-La native?





ALICIA MASTERS

Helen Hunt ("Mad about You") seems to have a sweet intelligence about her, and that makes her a great choice for the blind sculptress.

TERRAX

Former WWF wrestler Jesse "The Body" Ventura ("Predator") would be excellent as the ax-wielding world conqueror. W

The Gen13 spin-off book debuts with this look at the twisted underside of Project Genesis and New York by night!
JIM LEE PRESENTS
WARREN ELLIS WRITER
HUMBERTO RAMOS PENCILLER
SAL REGLA INKER
DV8 COMING SOON
Mayhem in Manhattan!
Featuring 8 Variant Deviant Covers!
DV8 #1.
Coming in August from
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FIRST LOOK

SHI: SHISEIJI

BILLY TUCCI'S SHI MEETS MANGA IN A JULY ONE-SHOT

SHI IS TURNING JAPANESE BEGINNING IN JULY WITH a manga style one-shot entitled *Shi: Shiseiji* to be released simultaneously in the United States and Japan. The only question creator Billy Tucci has is why it's taken so long. "I've always been a big fan of manga," Tucci says, "and so doing an issue of *Shi* for Japan seemed like an obvious choice, because Shi and manga just go hand in hand."

Shi: Shiseiji (pronounced "shi see gee"), illustrated in a manga style by Nelson Asencio and written by Bryan David Marshall, will feature the same art in both editions, but Tucci reports that the Japanese book will carry a variant cover–called a "Banzai Cover"–where all the text is in Japanese. Anticipation is so high on this one-shot that it'll be followed in October by a four-issue mini-series which will also see foreign shores. The self-contained story in *Shi: Shiseiji* will be consistent with the current *Shi* myth and storyline.

"The story centers around Arashi's bastard son who is attempting to do what his father has not been able to do, which is to find and destroy the Shi-killer," discloses Tucci. "Which is really interesting because Ana hasn't really killed anybody since issue #3. But all Arashi's son is concerned with is exacting revenge."

Tucci, who claims that some issues of *Shi* have actually found their way to the land of the rising sun, had previously been approached by some Japanese publishers with an eye toward bringing Shi to their shores. "But they didn't want my drawings," he laments. "They wanted to take my stories and hire their own artists to draw Shi in a manga style. I wanted to keep strict control and have Americans drawing it here in a manga style and give the Japanese the whole package."

Tucci struck exactly that deal at last year's San Diego Comic Con when a Japanese publisher agreed to Tucci's terms. "What I discovered was that a lot of women read comics in Japan and that it's exciting to read about a Japanese woman living on her own in New York. So we feel this is going to work both ways. This is opening up the Japanese market for U.S. books and it's also giving American mainstream readers a good introduction to manga."

Tucci, who says that the storyline for the October mini-series is still being tossed around, waves his patriotic flag high when extolling the virtues of Shi invading the orient. "This is basically our way of saying to the Japanese, 'Hey! Here we go! We can do it like this too."

Marc Shapiro, who reported on The Darkness *elsewhere in this issue, is also turning Japanese. Sushi, anyone?*

BY MARC SHAPIRO

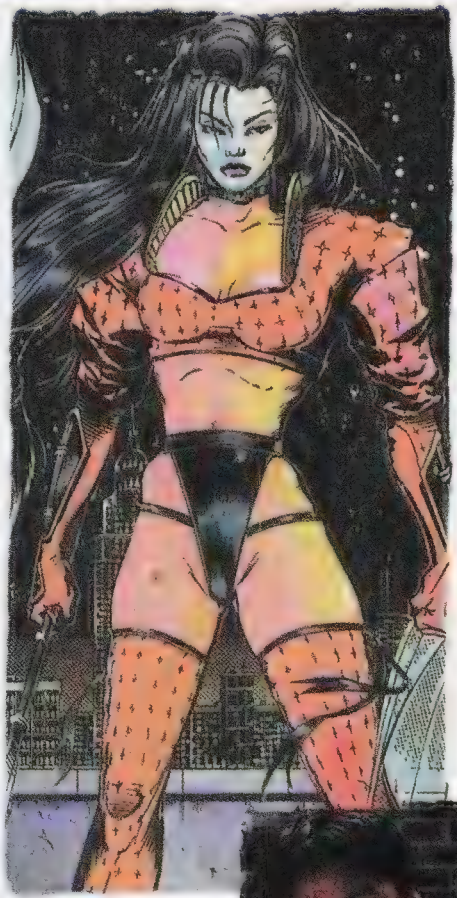
VITAL STATS

WHO?
Shi

WHAT?
Shi: Shiseiji, a one-shot done in a manga style to be released simultaneously in the U.S. and Japan

DEBUT?
July

WHAT'S HER DEAL?
Shi, everybody's favorite warrior woman, battles the bastard son of her nemesis Arashi



Mainstream meets manga: Tucci's Shi (above) gets a makeover by artist Nelson Asencio (at right)

ASENCIO 96

KILLING

MOWING DOWN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE, ONSLAUGHT WILL BE UNLEASHED IN JUNE

BY PAUL J. GRANT

"It's absolutely do or die," explains Mark Waid of Marvel's massive "Onslaught" crossover starting in June. "This is a suicide run for the Marvel Universe. It's the Twilight of the Gods. It's the Last Hurrah for Captain America, Thor, Iron Man, the Avengers and the Fantastic Four."

Onslaught, a deadly force that threatens the entire Marvel Universe, has been building to a crescendo for nearly a year, developing into Marvel's major summer crossover push. Now that the grim reaper is finally upon us, who—or what—the heck is Onslaught?

Marvel refuses to break its vow of silence, but Onslaught's identity will reportedly be revealed in *X-Men* #54, which ships in May. However, one thing we are sure of is that he's powerful. Powerful enough to demolish a heavyweight like Juggernaut, and have his heralds do the same to the X-Men. And it looks like the rest of the Marvel Universe is next.

Waid, who helped develop the storyline with Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras and fellow X-writer Scott Lobdell, laments that fans haven't seen a major event before that involves both the X-Men and everyone in the Marvel Universe. "Whenever Marvel does one of their big stunts, everybody else is involved, but the X-Men are conveniently on a mission in another galaxy," he observes.

"'Onslaught' is a very plot-driven story, but it's really a very simple plot. We're trying to pair off the X-Men and Marvel Heroes in interesting combinations, so the attraction is in how the characters interact, and how they face what very well may be their last mission ever. They will, in the course of this story, face their greatest defeat ever and have to rise from those ashes."

The crossover kicks off with the release of the first bookend issue. It's called *Onslaught: X-Men*, and is plotted by Mark Waid, dialogued by Scott Lobdell and penciled by Adam Kubert. The story will progress through almost every Marvel Universe title through June and July, and will be wrapped up in the first week in August in the other bookend, called *Onslaught: Marvel Universe*, which will be written by Waid and also penciled by Kubert.

The plot for the "Onslaught" crossover is also a closely guarded secret and sources reveal it had gone through several revisions even by early April. But Harras says there is at least one thing carved in stone.

"'Onslaught' is not going to be like Crisis on Infinite Earths," he hastens to explain, comparing Marvel's summer crossover to DC's 1985 continuity-altering series. "'Onslaught' is going to be an exciting story about the Marvel Heroes coming together. It will not change the backstory of the Marvel Universe. To my mind, the Marvel Universe ain't broke, although it may need some polishing here and there. 'Onslaught' will be one of the biggest curves thrown at the Marvel Universe, but it will be the same place that was started in 1961 by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. We're not saying to anybody that the books they read for the last 10 or 20 years never happened. That's not what Marvel is about."

Onslaught (at right, above) left his mark on Jean Grey (left) and Juggernaut (at right, below)

MACHINE

Waid essentially agrees, but claims that the linked events will have a major impact on the Marvel Universe.

"There's no history-changing involved during 'Onslaught' itself," he notes. "When the dust settles, the remaining heroes—Daredevil, Punisher, Spider-Man, the X-Men, those guys—will remember that the Marvel Heroes existed. We're not retroactively saying Captain America never existed. It's just that for the foreseeable future his adventures will no longer be taking place in the same reality as the Marvel Universe."

Sources reveal that the Jim Lee/Rob Liefeld revamps of Captain America, the FF, Iron Man and the Avengers will be happening in that other "reality."

And what will this mean for those left behind? Notes Waid, "The fact that they are now in a world that depends upon them more than ever to fill the void left behind by the Avengers and the FF, will affect them greatly." Where will they go from there? Will they search for the missing heroes? And will these missing heroes ever return?

That, all the creators agree, is a story for another time.

Writer Paul J. Grant hopes "Onslaught" won't affect his Marvel Universe counterpart.

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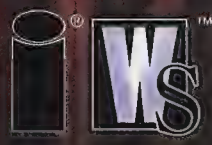


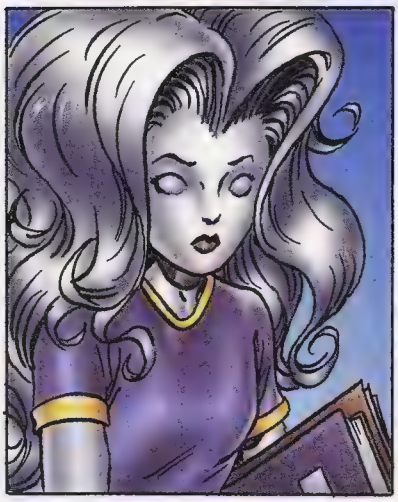
HEY!
SEEING AS HOW SCHOOL'S OUT FOR MOST FOLKS, WE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE NEAT TO TAKE A LOOK BACK AT A SUPERHERO YEARBOOK FROM WAY BACK WHEN!

—THE WIZARD STAFF

Superhero High School

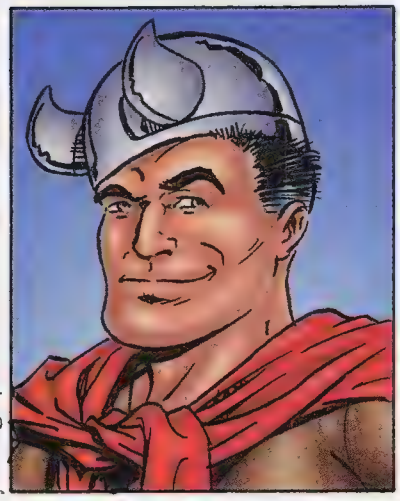
1976

ARCHIE ANDREWS
Thirty-two-time Senior Prom King, only student to never bag Betty or Veronica, voted Most Likely to Have Chopped Up and Eaten One of His Neighbors. Quote: "Hey, wanna know the real reason we call him Moose?"



HOPE RODRIGUEZ
Captain of the Undead Pep Squad, Nicest Pupil-less Eyes, runner-up in Shelley Long Lookalike Contest, voted Most Likely to Battle Satan and Usurp the Throne of Hell and Eradicate All Life From Earth. Quote: "I want to be an inspiration to other women...y'know, be a good girl."

VICTOR VON DOOM
Conquered and currently reigning over Hockey Team, Drama Club, Home-Ec Club, France, voted Most Likely to Try and Take Over the World but Get Repeatedly Beaten by a Guy Whose Only Superpower is That He's Stretchy and Stuff. Quote: "Tardy? TARDY?!? Bah! Doom need not sign in for homeroom."



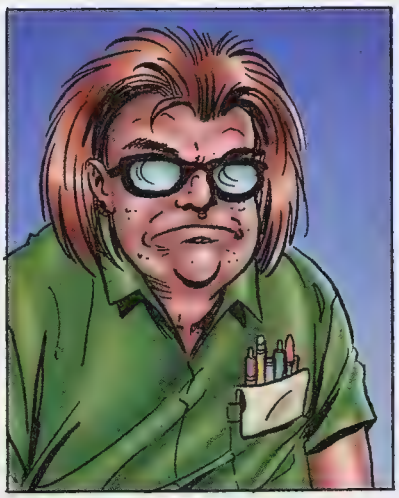
Photographer: Tom Grummett

CONAN GOLDBERG
Wrestling Team, Boxing Team, Deflowering Team, Halving Team, Eviscerating Team, Decapitation Team, Dismemberment Team, Bludgeoning Team, Foot in Your Ass Team, Pull Off Ugly Monster Head Team, Have Sex With Anything In A Coconut-Bra Team, Chorus.

MATTHEW MURDOCK
Matt wasn't on any team, nor was he the president of any club. Like everyone else who is different, Matt was picked on by those who made themselves feel important by making others feel like second-class citizens.
Kinda funny, though, that he faced the wrong way during class photos.

ELEKTRA NATCHIOS
Puncture Club, Stab Club, Pointy-Weapon-Thingie-That-We-Forget-the-Name-of-but-That-Mutant-Turtle-Guy-Also-Uses Club, Secretary of How-to-Catch-Razor-Tipped-Cards-in-Your-Throat Club. Voted Most Likely to be Created by Frank Miller.

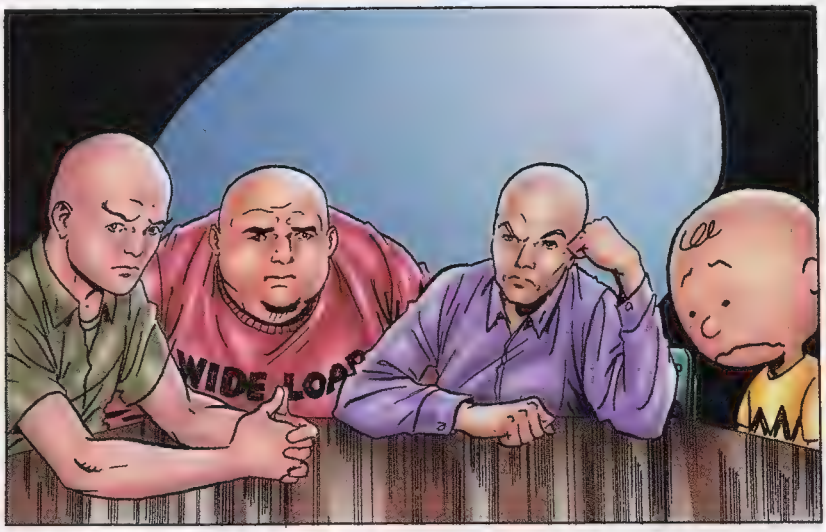
JOHANN SCHMIDT
Voted Most Likely to Attempt Genocide, winner of Joseph Mengele Biochemical Scholarship, President of Young Republicans Club. Quote: "To all uff those who haff picked un me und nailed me in ze head with jelly doughnuts, I vill kill you ull dead. Un my hed, yet!"



CHAUNCEY DELBERT
President of Chess Club, Math League, *AD&D* Team, winner of "Build an Awesome Android That Always Gets its Ass Kicked and Really Isn't All That Awesome" Scholarship. Quote: "Hey...you finished with that sandwich?"

WALLY WEST
Class Flirt, Cross-Continent Track Team, Can't-Stop-Vibrating Team, President of Let's-All-Use-the-Time-Platform-and-Go-Back-in-Time-and-Screw-With-History Team, voted Most Likely to Have a Tapeworm or Something.

SAM "SNAP" WILSON
Best Dressed, Best Dancer, Best Hair, President of Soul Train Fan Club (New York chapter), Golden-Brownie Award winner for senior class Bake Sale, voted Most Likely to Pop a Cap in Your Sorry Ass.



FIRST MEETING OF T.B.K.W.D.G.A.*
(*Teen Bald Kids Who Don't Get Any)
The inaugural meeting of T.B.K.W.D.G.A. saw its founding members (from left to right: Chuck Xavier, Wil Fisk, Lex Luthor and Charles Brown) kick off the gala event in grand style by sitting on the couch and eating corn chips while salivating over Cindy Crawford workout videos. W

DAWN of a New Era

BY MATT BRADY

Joe Linsner's DAWN has evolved from a 'Vanna White-type hostess' to a 'goddess of birth and rebirth'

Who is Dawn?

Well, that depends on who you ask.

Joe Linsner has always known who she is, since he debuted the mysterious, beautiful redhead on the cover of the 1993 horror anthology *Cry For Dawn*, which Linsner collaborated on with Joe Monks.

Linsner's vision was to create "a goddess of birth and rebirth," to combine "pin-up art, with deep heart and soul."

But fans saw things differently. Much differently.

"People were interested in seeing Dawn hack and slash people in half, and wanted to see her running around in her underwear, splattered in blood," says Linsner. "A lot of people don't realize that Dawn wears more clothes than Wonder Woman. It's true. Check it out.

"On the surface, Dawn's clothing appears to be lingerie. I guess that makes a straight connection to sex, and people think the worst."

Linsner has always thought the best of Dawn and has been drawing her in one form or another since high school. "She started out [in *Cry For Dawn* #1] as a Vanna White-type hostess, introducing the stories," he says. "After the first issue, I felt really uncomfortable with that because, deep down, I knew she was going to find her place somewhere else. So after *Cry For Dawn* #1, she only appeared on the covers."

But after nine extremely dark issues of *Cry For Dawn*, Linsner felt the need to move in a different direction. He had purged all of his personal demons after enduring the rejection and ensuing frustration that came with being an aspiring artist. He felt the only logical step was to do a full Dawn story. To that point, Dawn had basically only appeared on covers, where she was dressed in a corset with three black tears flowing from her left eye.

After a fallout with Monks over the creative direction of *Cry for Dawn*, Linsner took Dawn to Sirius Entertainment, kicking off with 1994's *Drama*, a collection of stories that laid the groundwork for Dawn's "universe."

Dawn's "universe" is populated with angels and demons, a world of heaven and hell with individuals searching for enlightenment and gods meddling in human affairs. The one constant is Dawn, an enigmatic redhead with a haunting face. Mix in Linsner's ultra-realistic, yet fantastically surreal artwork, and Dawn has continued to grow in popularity.

Linsner's current project is the six-issue mini-series, *Dawn: Lucifer's Halo* (issue #4 just shipped in May). The story focuses on Darrian Ashoka, a young New Yorker just going about his daily business: busting heads and petty thievery. All this changes when he meets Dawn one night in Times Square. When she asks some probing questions, Darrian starts to realize some basic truths about himself and sets off on a quest.

"Darrian will be put, courtesy of Dawn, on the same level as the forces of heaven and hell," Linsner reveals. "Once he's on the same level, he'll be able to make his own decisions. Ultimately, he'll become his own person without feeling tension from either side. The pot of gold at the end of the rainbow is Darrian attaining some kind of balance in his life."

But what about Dawn's future? Since *Dawn: Lucifer's Halo* is only six issues, what are Linsner's plans for Dawn beyond that? "I want to treat Dawn the same way Warner Brothers treats Bugs Bunny," he says. "Bugs is a completely air-tight character, and you can plop him down into any storyline, and you don't have to worry about how storyline A connects to storyline B.

"With Dawn, I'd like to skip around. Immediately after the *Dawn* series, I'm going to put her into a couple of different genres that will explain different facets of the character and redefine a lot of themes and concepts that I'm dealing with right now. My first attempt at this is the *Dawn* #1/2 I'm doing for *Wizard*. Basically, it's a superhero rewrite of the Dawn story, the heart of Dawn's story compressed to 16 pages. I bet most people will be able to make a lot more sense out of it than anything else I'm doing with Dawn."

Linsner feels that he's found his dream job, and will continue to put out Dawn material as long as he's still able to hold a pencil. "Most adults outgrow the feeling of joy you get from doodling. I'm lucky to be in a position where I can doodle all day long. *Dawn* is just me doodling a lot of my favorite things. I'm no longer chasing my nightmares with my work, now I'm chasing my dreams."

Matthew Brady, who wrote the Spawn "Character Profile" in this issue, has only seen dawn once, and that's just 'cause he hadn't passed out yet.

MEN OF STEEL

By Rob Allstetter

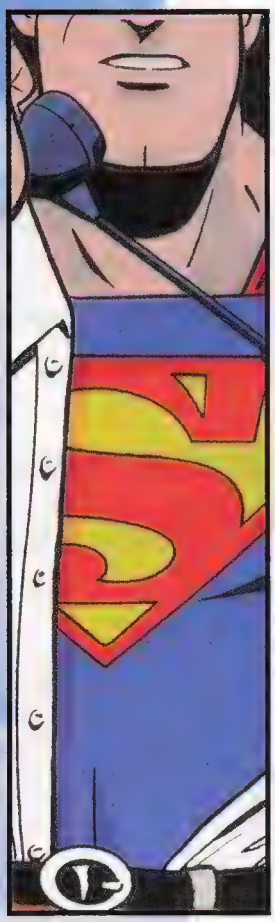
'Batman' team of Paul Dini and Bruce Timm hope to weave their animated magic on 'Superman'

Bruce Timm and Paul Dini are in a transition state.

After guiding "Batman: The Animated Series" cartoon to an Emmy, the animator and writer/script editor have teamed with another "Batman" alumnus, Alan Burnett, to produce the animated adventures of DC Comics' other leading hero, Superman, for an ambitious new television series simply titled "Superman."

They're also going from great expectations to perhaps even greater ones. The fledgling Kids WB network has ordered 65 half-hour episodes of "Superman," scheduling 13 for the first season, including a three-parter that will air as a prime-time movie to kick off the series in late August. That story will deal with Superman's origin, his growing up in Smallville and arrival in Metropolis. "Superman" then settles into its Saturday, 10 a.m. (ET) time slot in September.

Not only do the producers face the challenge of high hopes after "Batman," but they also have to confront an equally well known character that in many ways is more difficult to transfer to animation. It's almost like night and day—going from the dark and gritty world of Gotham City and Batman to Superman's bright and clean Metropolis.



"The dynamics are all different," says Dini, who will also script episodes. "Batman is pretty much a solo character. There's Batman and Alfred in the Batcave. They have a couple of sniping remarks to each other, and then Batman goes out and puts his fist in the Joker's face again. It's a very simple show as far as the character motivation. Superman is tougher to do."

Adds Timm: "Batman is almost intrinsically cooler because he has that dark edge to him, that dark *film noir* atmosphere, which we don't have to play with on this show. Even the costume," says the animator. "Superman's costume isn't as cool as Batman's costume. Batman's got all this black all over him. He looks like a bad guy, and bad guys always got the cooler costumes.

"You don't have to think very hard to make Batman an interesting character. You have to put more thought in to make Superman interesting. It's a challenge."

Timm and Dini certainly seem of one mind on the series. You can sense the creative synergy buzzing between them as they frequently complete each other's thoughts through the speakerphone from their Warner Bros. office. With the first episodes of "Superman" just being sent overseas to be animated, they offer *Wizard* an initial glimpse at the show.

THE NEWEST SUPERMAN

Nobody is going to call this Superman a boy scout, nor will he fit into the styles of ABC's live-action "Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman" and the theatrical films. The animated Clark Kent will be a reporter at the *Daily Planet*, but he won't be a nerd and he'll be extremely competitive with fellow staffer Lois Lane.

"When we were looking back at a lot of other interpretations of Superman, [we found that] in the 1950s TV show, largely because of limitations with budget, the action was mostly on Clark," says Dini. "They were playing him as reporter/private investigator, and that added a nice edge to his personality. We thought that was something to capture in animation.

"Nobody plays Clark as a hard-ass, but they did it in the TV show and that worked out great. He is this tough type of guy when he goes after a story. So we're playing that up."

Superman might not be quite what you expect, either.

"We're making Superman a little more mysterious," Timm says. "When he saves somebody, he doesn't stand around and say, 'No problem, citizen, it's all part of the job. Thank you, Commissioner, blah, blah, blah…' He saves somebody and he's off again. He's quiet and mysterious.

"Clark is the opposite. Clark's a hard-boiled crime reporter. He's a bit of a motor-mouth and he has a sarcastic sense of humor to everything. There's actually quite a difference in their personalities."

Crafting a game plan for Superman has been tough. Carrying it out has been even tougher.

"These characters have been around so long in the various media, and we're trying to reinvent them to a degree to make them seem interesting again, fresh and exciting,"

says Timm. "At the same time, not do what 'Lois and Clark' is doing and not do what the Chris Reeve movies did and not do exactly what the comics have done.

"Every writer that comes into the show says, 'Superman's a big boy scout, Clark's a wimp and Lois is a bitch.' No, no, no. That's not what we want to do."

"We've had to work as hard as anybody freeing up our minds as to how we see these characters," Dini says. "We wrote a bible that we liked an awful lot. After the first scripts came in, I sat down with the writers and artists and I said, 'Look, guys, we've created a show we really like. How come we're not making that show?'

"It's so easy to fall into the trap of making Clark this dull guy and making Superman quip after he throws a punch. I said, 'No quips. No gags. No jokes.' We really have to work harder to make this unique. It's a character everybody knows, but make it cool, make it different."

The relationship between Clark and Lois will be antagonistic, especially when the two determined reporters have to work together on stories. But is there a romance in the future between Clark and Lois?

"As this point, I would say no," Dini claims. "But the more we get into the characters, the more we may gravitate to certain nuances that seem right to us."

"I don't think there are really romantic sparks between them," his fellow producer Timm says. "But there are definitely romantic sparks between Lois and Superman. It's not like Clark pines for Lois. We won't be playing up that angle at all. Clark can have his cake and eat it, too. When he's Superman, Lois is crazy for him, but when he's Clark, he's ribbing her all the time. It's a strange relationship.

"I'm not going to say they won't kiss someday, but they won't be like boyfriend and girlfriend."

THE VILLAINS

"Batman was easier because he had such a great rogue's gallery. Almost all of the villains were really interesting and exciting because they were all so psychologically screwed up and so weird and inventive," Timm says. "I went out and got that Superman encyclopedia and thumbed through it to see what we might want to do, and the list of villains was staggeringly dull. There's the Parasite, Brainiac and Bizarro—and that's it.

"All the other classic Superman villains are old, fat guys in business suits...the Toyman, the Prankster. Where's the visual appeal there? We're having to either re-invent these guys from scratch or create new villains, and we will have some new villains."

"Thank God for Darkseid," adds Dini of one of the show's eventual main bad guys.

The producers went to John Byrne's reworking of Lex Luthor for inspiration for their main villain. Luthor will be the ruthless, bald businessman who basically runs Metropolis. Luthor will have an assistant: Mercy Graves, a female chauffeur/bodyguard created for the show. She is somewhat of a sane equivalent to Luthor that Harley Quinn was to the Joker.

Brainiac has been given a Kryptonian origin as a computer that runs planetary operations and escapes before Krypton explodes. "We can't say that Brainiac is completely the altruistic artificial intelligence that the Kryptonians intended him to be," says Dini.

There are no plans yet for Doomsday. On the other end of the spectrum, how about Mr. Mxyzptlk?

"We haven't gotten to him yet. I'm looking forward to him and kind of dreading him also," Dini says. "I just don't want to do him as a little elf who makes buildings come to life and does stupid things to Superman. As soon as I find something interesting and satisfying to do with the character, then I'll be happy to use him."

Adds Timm: "Don't get us wrong. I enjoy all those old, weird, goofy Superman stories as much as anybody, but they are old, weird, goofy Superman stories. I don't want to offend anybody, especially those die-hard old-time fans, but you have to think modern. We're in the '90s now; what are kids going to think of this show?"

THE LOOK

Early on, Timm envisioned a 1940s look, but changed his mind—thanks to advice from his bosses and a desire not to compete with the classic Fleischer Superman cartoons. Although there will be areas where "Superman" resembles "Batman" (i.e., character designs), Timm makes it clear "it's not a carbon copy."

"We're saying the show is set in the present, but it's a very futuristic present," says Timm, whose art team includes several Batman holdovers. "Metropolis doesn't just look like New York. It's much bigger and more optimistic-looking. We'll still have a lot of art deco elements, so it does have a little bit of a retro look to it. But it's futuristic retro; we're calling it ocean-liner deco with all those zigzaggy, hard-edged buildings. Everything's rounded off at the top. The city has an open feel.

"It's actually the flip side of Gotham City. Where Gotham was dark and moody and depressing, Metropolis is bright and optimistic. The scale of the city is huge, with levels upon levels of street layers. It's not oppressive; it's quite beautiful."

Another difference from Batman is a Jack Kirby, science-fiction feel in the Supershow. Timm and Dini are both big Kirby fans.

As for Superman himself, the producers eliminated the long hair from the comics after what Timm calls "long, drawn-out negotiations with DC Comics.

"We wanted that classic clean-cut Superman look. He looks very much like the definitive Superman," he notes. "Early on, I really wanted to go back to the original [Jerry] Siegel and [Joe] Shuster version of Superman, because there's just something charming about that—the really squinty eyes and he's a bit shorter."

"You don't have to think very hard to make Batman an interesting character. You have to put more thought in to make Superman interesting. It's a challenge."

—Bruce Timm, producer of "Superman"

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Superman's costume has been darkened for television. "His blue is very, very dark, and in some scenes in long shots, it almost looks black," Timm says.

"We're bringing in characters that have a very current feel in the comic books."
—Paul Dini, producer of "Superman"

THE SUPPORTERS

"It's a huge supporting cast," Timm says. "We're not going to see all the supporting cast all the time—it's just too many characters—but it does give us a lot of leeway in terms of variety."

Jimmy Olsen will be working odd jobs at the *Planet* for Perry White, looking for a staff position. "He won't be, 'Oh, golly, Miss Lane,' " says Timm. "He's a bit of a weasel."

To diversify the cast, Cat Grant has been supplanted by a new character: Angela Chen, an Asian-American gossip columnist who also has her own tabloid TV show. You can also look for Ma and Pa Kent, Bibbo, Metropolis' Special Crimes Unit, Maggie Sawyer, Dan Turpin and Commissioner Henderson (an inspector in the comics).

THE VOICES

Whoever casts the next Superman live-action film might want to check out the voice cast for the animated series. Tim Daly of the NBC situation comedy "Wings" stars as Clark Kent and Superman, and Dana Delany is Lois Lane.

"He's great. They should just put him in the suit," laughs Timm of Daly. "In fact, our whole cast looks like their parts a bit."

The Superman producers worked with Delany before on "Batman: Mask of the Phantasm," the animated theatrical film in which Delany played Bruce Wayne's long-lost love.

"It was fun during the auditions [for Superman] when Andrea Romano, our voice director, said, 'This is Dana Delany as Lois Lane,' and Dana said, 'I've always wanted to hear those words,' " Dini says. "She's always been a fan of the character."

"She plays it—if anything—almost too hard-boiled sometimes," adds Timm. "We've had to pull her back and say, 'We're getting carried away with this. We don't want to make her come off as unlikeable.' She brings a real edge to the part. She's interesting, and Lois is a fascinating character coming out of her mouth."

Dini and Timm feel they've scored again with veteran character actor Clancy Brown ("The Shawshank Redemption") as Lex Luthor. Brown originally auditioned as Superman, but, as has been the case throughout most of his career, wound up being the villain.

"We always have a problem with the show being a little too dialogue-heavy, but whenever Clancy starts spouting, it's like, 'OK, give him all the dialogue,' " says Timm. "He's suave, but brutal at the same time. And it just comes out of the voice. He's a slick killer."

David Kaufmann, who plays Dexter on "Freakazoid!," does the voice of Jimmy Olsen, and George Dzundza, the Ventriloquist and Scarface on "Batman," is Perry White. Villains include Malcolm McDowell as Metallo and Jim Belushi as the Parasite.

THE GUEST STARS

Yes, Batman will be appearing on "Superman," but don't look for him until the second season. And, unlike the Batman series, there will be lots of DC guest stars in the show. In fact, Lobo appears in a two-parter in the first season.

"That's one of the other touches we're doing to update the show a little bit," Dini says. "We're bringing in characters that have a very current feel in the comic books."

"We have a lot of plans along those lines. We have a two-parter scheduled for the second season with Darkseid and the New Gods," Timm says. "We also have an interesting take on Supergirl. It's very different than what's been done in the past.

"We want to use Mister Miracle in an episode separate from the New Gods two-parter. We have the Spectre Christmas show. [*Laughs*] We'd possibly like to use Wonder Woman, maybe Aquaman, and some weird ones, too, like The Demon."

Adds Dini: "The key with bringing in guest characters is we can't bring them in just for the sake of trotting them out. Then, it's like, 'Hello, Green Lantern.' 'Hello, Superman, how are you today?' That gets to be dull real quick. We have to find a reason for those characters to get together. It's a little more logical in Superman's world that he would have team-ups, rather than Batman's world with such a solo character."

THE BIG PUSH

Believe it or not, "Superman" has already been on the air. Actually, it's a blink-and-you'll-miss-it segment in a promotional spot for Warner Bros.' Saturday morning lineup. This is the first boulder in an avalanche of publicity sure to accompany what may become Warner's foundation series. A set of trading cards based on Superman is scheduled for a late summer release from SkyBox, there will be a set of action figures and sources indicate DC will publish a tie-in comic called *Superman Adventures*.

"Oh, yeah, everyone's treating it like a big deal," says Timm, although he and Dini are somewhat guarded about too much hype surrounding the series.

"We don't really want to have people knowing what the stories are until they're on the air," Dini says. "It pisses me off when everything is given away in entertainment columns. People don't have to know. They can watch the show and be surprised. And we'll have surprises."

Rob Allstetter, Wizard's "Trailer Park" writer, is still waiting to hear the words, "This is Rob Allstetter as Beppo the Super-Monkey."

Tim Daly (above) voices Clark Kent/Superman, while Dana Delany (right) is Lois Lane

Lex Luthor is voiced by Clancy Brown (above)

THE PHANTOM

TRADING CARDS

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Celebrating the 60th anniversary of this worldwide legend is Paramount Pictures' big Summer Blockbuster, *"The Phantom"*, featuring Billy Zane in the starring role. Written by the author of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, and produced by Alan Ladd Jr. *(Star Wars)* and Robert Evans *(The Godfather)*, ***The Phantom— "The Ghost Who Walks"*** —is your can't-miss superhero for '96.

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FIRST LOOK BONUS

THE DARKNESS

SILVESTRI MARKS MONTHLY RETURN BY TEAMING WITH HORROR KING GARTH ENNIS

GARTH ENNIS IS WRITING THE DARKNESS. AND Marc Silvestri has his fingers crossed.

"You know anything Garth is involved in will definitely be twisted, so I'm obviously holding my breath," says Silvestri, the series' creator. "But you know Garth. If he puts anything questionable in, then I guess I'll have to give him a call."

Ennis, writer of Vertigo's ultra-violent, over-the-top Preacher will be joined by Silvestri on pencils when The Darkness makes its formal Top Cow debut in November with the beginning of a four-part story arc. But for those who can't wait, a four-page preview will appear in July's *Cyberforce* #25, followed in October by a full-blown 32-page formal intro in *Witchblade* #10.

The Darkness, which has been bouncing around Silvestri's brain for a number of years, is the stuff of quasi-legend. Numerous writers, including Ann Nocenti, reportedly drifted in and out of the project before Silvestri sought out Ennis based on his Preacher work. And with a number of delays on *The Darkness*, Silvestri gave Ennis (who also scribes DC's popular Hitman) the *Medieval Spawn/Witchblade* mini-series to test the Top Cow waters.

While even the folks over at Top Cow are currently a bit unclear on a number of the comic's concepts, they are focusing on a few specifics. As of this writing, the story centers on a present-day hitman named Jackie who becomes the unwilling recipient of the Darkness. This power allows him to be immortal and create anything he can imagine, but his creations only last so long as it's dark; when the sun rises, it's adiós muchachos. Since Jackie outlives everyone he loves, he lives quite the depressed and lonely life.

"He's definitely in the doldrums," explains Silvestri of the story particulars. "He's dark and brooding and, in a very real sense, very noble. To this point, the Darkness has been used for evil, but since Jackie is not a totally evil man, there's a personal conflict that involves his quest to find a mate."

The Darkness' world, which Silvestri claims will be "very character-driven," will also include a Darkness-created entourage of creatures that are an intregal part of Jackie's life, and an underground culture of evil creatures called the Darklings, "who are threatening to gain a foothold on Earth." To make matters worse, the evil queen of the Darklings has some romantic—or actually, lustful—designs for our reluctant hero.

Silvestri relates that he's held out unleashing *The Darkness* until "I could get it done right." He now proclaims The Darkness to be right. You can tell by his exuberance: "It's going to be cool and it's going to be great!"

VITAL STATS

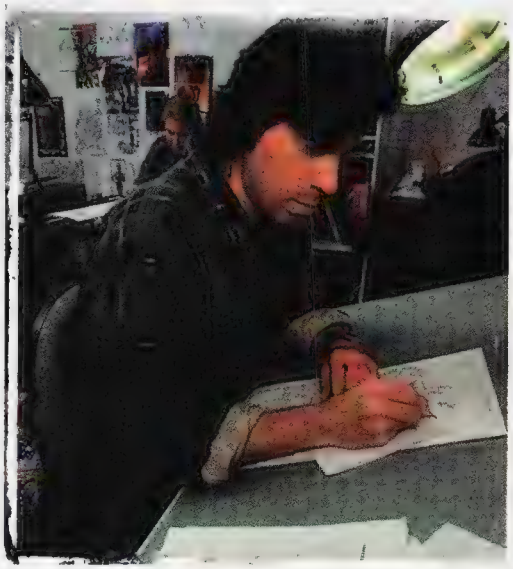
WHO?
A lonely, immortal crimefighter named Jackie who has the power to create anything he wants within the darkness, but come sunup, his creations disappear

WHAT?
The Darkness, a monthly book from Image's Top Cow Productions featuring the talents of creator/artist Marc Silvestri and writer Garth Ennis

DEBUT?
The Darkness debuts in November

WHAT'S HIS DEAL?
Jackie must cope with an unwanted power, an evil queen who lusts after him, and creatures from the underworld, all while searching for his perfect mate

Marc Shapiro, who interviewed Beau Smith for this issue, isn't scared of the dark. That's 'cause he's got his Batman nite-lite.



Marc Silvestri: Gearing up for *The Darkness*

BY MARC SHAPIRO

BRIAN
July 1996

MAJOR

By Scott Beatty

DC trots out its superhero Dream Team with a revamp of the Justice League of America

LEAGUE

THE BIG GUNS ARE BACK.

Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Flash, Aquaman, Green Lantern and the Martian Manhunter are reuniting to become DC Comics' new elite superteam, the Justice League of America. No longer will the JLA suffer through second-stringers like Metamorpho and Blue Beetle.

This new era for DC's premier team will begin in November with the release of *Justice League of America* #1 under the creative guidance of writer Grant Morrison and penciler Howard Porter. As series editor Ruben Diaz explains, the decision to relaunch the archetypal superteam, particularly an incarnation including nearly all of DC's heavy hitters, involves rebuilding the JLA fandom from the ground up. "We were just looking in general," he says, "at the entire industry and wondering, 'What memories are kids going to have when they're our age reading comics?' When it came to the Justice League, we realized that putting anyone but the icons in the book was like putting four musicians in bowl cuts and calling them the Beatles."

Jump-starting the revamp was a proposal by fan-favorite writer Grant Morrison, citing Mark Waid's writing on *The Flash* as a monthly favorite, and one that piqued his interest in returning to mainstream superheroics. "For a long time, I've been really sick and tired of depressing, gritty superheroes, and characters with trench coats and stubble on their faces. That seemed to really dominate the whole '80s scene," Morrison offers. "And now that this sort of Dark Age of comics is coming to an end, we're starting to see superheroes you can look up to again."

Jettisoning the majority of the current Justice League membership, and re-establishing the roll call of DC's most powerful and recognizable characters, Morrison is taking the franchise back to square one, creating a roster of mythic proportions. While the current Justice League titles have been predominantly filled by DC's second-string heroes, the thrust of Morrison's upcoming work has been to examine the core element that's made the title so enduring. As the writer explains, "The Fantastic Four is a family unit. The X-Men was originally a school. The Metal Men was the periodic table come to life, and so on. All the different teams seem to proceed from some specific dynamic. And to me, the Justice League always came across as a kind of superhero United Nations who only gets together to deal with things that are on a global or intergalactic scale."

In pitching the new direction for the title, Morrison signaled the return of the Justice League to a tension-filled "war room atmosphere," where the heroes may certainly be at odds with one another. "These are the great myths of the DC Universe," Morrison wrote in his proposal, adding that the new *Justice League of America* would definitely be about "great battles, awesome power struggles, betrayals, friendships, Earth-shaking decisions and their consequences, and star-spanning struggles of Good against Evil." This is a Justice League far different from the superteam that debuted in 1960. The status quo has changed. More than one mem-

ber has undergone significant changes in the last 37 years. And both editor and writer agree that the old ingredients might make for a vastly different stew in 1996.

Known for his offbeat approaches to DC characters in *Animal Man* and *Doom Patrol*, Morrison's fans are avidly speculating on both content and approach to *Justice League of America*. Where his previous work often mined the offbeat aspects of classic characters, this time the writer is anxious to establish the JLA as the undisputed council of DC's superhumans.

Morrison regards this new Justice League of America as the antithesis to the 1960s team that he describes as having "embodied the pre-Dallas [referring to the Kennedy assassination] spirit of America." Where the former dwelt on hopes of peace and global unity, Morrison's Justice League of America embodies a more apocalyptic vision. "Who they represent is our fears of the end of the century and of the end of the millennium. And the Justice League, to me, has a slightly creepy element in the idea of these fantastic godlike beings sitting in a fortress and watching the world. I suppose it's darker in a way, and offers strange paranoid overtones of the fear we're feeling of the end of the world," Morrison offers.

Downplaying such inevitable comparisons to *Watchmen*, Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' pivotal portrayal of costumed heroes marshaling in the face of oblivion, Morrison hopes to establish a new framework in which to regard DC's major players. "I think what Alan did was to humanize superheroes. *Watchmen* showed superheroes as completely flawed creatures under the masks. But what I want to do in *Justice League* is actually flip that whole thing around and say, 'These are the pantheon of gods in the DC Universe.' " In the series' very first story arc, this sensibility is explored in great detail. Despite being the reigning metahumans, the team discovers that "it isn't quite easy to fix the world even if you have superhuman powers." As a race of wandering superheroes known as the Hyperclan come to Earth, the Justice League is swiftly forced to re-examine its role in the global order.

But these apocalyptic overtones aside, Morrison hopes that *Justice League of America* will encapsulate the successes of previous incarnations. "What I'm trying to do," he says, "is combine the elements I liked best about it—the imaginative thrust of the 1960s Gardner Fox JLA stories, which were real roller-coaster rides all the time, filled with weird concepts. Then add the kind of humor of the Giffen/DeMatteis Justice League stuff from the '80s. And finally, to combine those and put in my own flavor."

To complement the epic scale that Morrison imagines, Diaz assigned the penciling chores to rising star Howard Porter, fresh from DC's *Underworld Unleashed* mini-series. Porter, on the fast-track at DC since his beginnings on *The Ray*, most recently rendered *JLX*, the Amalgam Comics hybrid of the Justice League and X-Men.

"If there's any one accomplishment that I can be happy about," says Diaz, "that would be bringing Howard into comics. Hopefully, people will see how great we think he is."

Porter, who'll be teaming again with *JLX* inker John Dell, admits that having the opportunity to draw the Justice League is any illustrator's dream assignment. "It definitely pushes you to do your best, knowing that there are all these creators out there ready to fill your shoes if something should happen," says Porter.

And in regards to both creators and characters, Porter acknowledges that certain story elements have reminded him he's very much in the big leagues. "There was a part in the script when I could have sworn Grant was writing about me. Green Lantern turns with this look saying, 'I'm part of a team with these guys? What am I doing here?' I thought to myself, does that mean me?" Modesty aside, Porter's editor is confident in the artist's abilities. "Having worked exclusively at DC for the last four years, it's certainly something he deserved. He's paid his dues," says Diaz.

Fans of the original Justice League may fondly remember the team's mountain headquarters and later an orbiting satellite headquarters, but the revamped Justice League is opting for some new digs. Readers of the current series realize that the League operates out of an alien starship. But as Diaz explains, forthcoming events will render this outpost largely uninhabitable, forcing the League to opt for a citadel in Antarctica, "hearkening back in no certain way to the Fortress of Solitude, but more along the lines of looking to create an Earth-bound Mt. Olympus."

Morrison himself fancies this more removed location, adding to the apocalyptic "feel" he intends to establish in the book. "There's a sense of looking down and out across the whole world as if they're dominating it from this cold fortress," he explains. "So it was kind of just to get the feeling of remoteness and fortification."

Though it stars DC's major players, the creators promise that the new League's membership will eventually grow. "By the end of the first year, there will be 12 permanent Justice Leaguers," says Morrison. "It's like Arthur's round table, or Robin Hood and the Merry Men." With tentative plans to bring such former League members

"The Justice League, to me, has a slightly creepy element in the idea of these fantastic godlike beings sitting in a fortress and watching the world." —Grant Morrison

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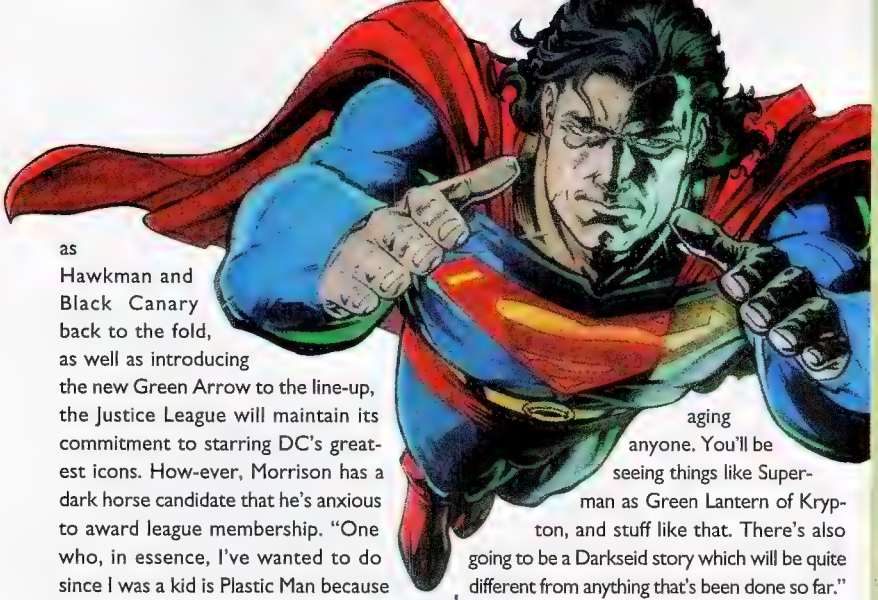

as Hawkman and Black Canary back to the fold, as well as introducing the new Green Arrow to the line-up, the Justice League will maintain its commitment to starring DC's greatest icons. How-ever, Morrison has a dark horse candidate that he's anxious to award league membership. "One who, in essence, I've wanted to do since I was a kid is Plastic Man because he's a character everyone knows. I've got this idea that basically Plastic Man is Jim Carrey as Ace Ventura, so I want to do him like that in the Justice League, which is also going to throw another spanner into the works of this fabulous dignified organization."

And while some fans may miss such stalwarts as Firestorm, Blue Beetle or Captain Atom, Diaz promises that these and other former members may make an occasional appearance or cameo. "They'll certainly be used to populate the second-run stable, where we may not be able to have Superman and Batman in every adventure," he says. But as the editor reveals, following events in the first issue, quite a number of heroes are excluded from the new JLA. "Metamorpho is one of the heroes who is most actively 'not happy' with the arrangement and how it turned out," says Diaz, promising that future JLA stories would focus on the superhero community's divergent opinions of this exclusive team.

Expect the same formula being used for the revamped superteam to apply to its villains. "One of the odd things about the Justice League," says Diaz, "is that they never really had a large rogues gallery per se, beyond their first incarnation, so Grant has said that he has something in mind for the Shaggy Man, while I'm just dying to do a Starro story."

Morrison admits a desire to rescue Starbreaker, the cosmic vampire, from comic book limbo. "But the kind of things I'd really like to bring back are the fantastic images like the Flash having to sit and play chess against weird, three-eyed aliens," he says. On the immediate front, Morrison promises the return of the dream-altering Dr. Destiny. "It's probably going to be this thing called 'Imaginary Stories,' which kind of slides all those stories that nobody admits to having read into continuity without dam aging anyone. You'll be seeing things like Superman as Green Lantern of Krypton, and stuff like that. There's also going to be a Darkseid story which will be quite different from anything that's been done so far."

And Diaz expects other familiar villains to return in the title's first year. Look for a veritable who's who of classic Justice League foes updated for the new millennium—Kanjar Ro, Professor Ivo, T.O. Morrow, and their new creation Tomorrow Woman are all set to help inaugurate the new *Justice League of America*.

One of the major concerns Diaz has editing *Justice League of America* is guarding the characters that other DC editors have entrusted to his care. For the first time in decades, the Justice League is filled with members who, with the exception of the Martian Manhunter, each appear in his/her own respective title. "The real trick of doing the *Justice League*," Diaz says, "is that you can't really alter the characters in any major way because they belong to other editors, and are part and parcel to what's going on in their parent books."

While continuity is a concern to both editors and readers, Morrison envisions a rather novel approach to skirt this issue. "The idea I had was like the old aboriginal mythology of dreamtime," he says. "That was the place where the heroes and gods constantly fought their battles, and constantly played out their stories. These are the big myths of the Justice League. So the continuity actually exists, but there's a sense of this happening on a vaster canvas in the background."

In the end, Morrison is confident that the new *Justice League of America* will signal a return and commitment to quality comics and grand storytelling. "I just know that this is going to work," he says simply. "In the end, these are the world's greatest superheroes, and it's as simple as that. It has to be the world's greatest comic book." W

Scott Beatty, who contributed to Wizard's Wolverine Special, is pretty peeved he didn't get invited to join the new JLA. The jerks.

First Impressions

Asking *Justice League of America* writer Grant Morrison to play "word association" provided these peeks into the motivations behind the JLA's updated roll call:

Superman: "He's like the president, basically. But he finds his role quite difficult because everyone looks up to him for guidance."

Batman: "The complete outsider, but absolutely essential. We want to have him as a consultant even if he's not active. If the JLA's got a problem, they just send it to Batman and he works it out in five minutes. But Batman doesn't want to work with anyone because, as far as he's concerned, it's like having seven Robin's beside him—just a bunch of hanger-ons who'll make him a target."

Flash: "He's the fluid medium that binds everyone together."

Wonder Woman: "I'd like to get away from the role she used to play in the old Gardner Fox stories, where she would write up the minutes at the end of the JLA meetings. I want to boost her up to the stature of Superman. Everyone recognizes it, and a lot of them are quite frightened of her in this respect."

Green Lantern: "The new guy. He kind of takes the reader's role in the whole thing. We see it through his eyes in a lot of ways."

Martian Manhunter: "The noble tribesman of a tribe that's long gone. I see him much like an ancient Indian warrior—real wisdom and battle craft. And because everyone recognizes that he's been in every incarnation of the Justice League, he knows more about this team than anyone else."

Aquaman: "He's this strange kind of edgy character in the Justice League now because he doesn't want to be there, but Wonder Woman persuades him. The others can't understand why he's become like this [referring to his more aggressive "harpooned" look]. They remember him as being different. So I think he's part of the whole dynamic because they don't quite trust him, and he doesn't quite trust them anymore." ■ *SB*

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THE FUTURE IS HISTORY

CATCHING UP WITH THE 30TH CENTURY FUTURE WORLD OF DC'S LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES

M'ONEL, THE LEGION'S ANSWER TO SUPERMAN

If you haven't been keeping up with the Legion of Super-Heroes, you've been missing out. Since *Legion of Super-Heroes* and *Legionnaires*' relaunch two years ago, DC Comics' double-barreled sleeper hit has not only shed its reader-unfriendliness, but it is also one garnering some of the biggest buzz from fans.

For those not in the know, the 30th century superteam stars in two monthly interconnecting comics, and is comprised of teenage heroes with various superpowers, each hailing from different planets throughout the universe.

One might believe that with a whopping roster of 18 active members, the Legion might seem daunting to be introduced to, but don't sweat it. In fact, relax. What follows is pretty much a breakdown of the Legion's story so far.

IN THE BEGINNING

It all began one thousand years after tomorrow, in a bright future full of incredible technology and marvels. Rokk Krinn, a young sports hero from the planet Braal, Garth Ranzz, a runaway from Winath with lightning powers, and Imra Ardeen, a young telepath from Titan, found themselves sharing an intergalactic shuttle with R.J. Brande, the third-richest being in the newly formed United Planets. When the three banded together to defend Brande from an assassination attempt, Brande was motivated by their selfless act and youthful optimism to form a team of young heroes. Inspired by the heroes of Earth's 20th century, and funded by Brande, the three became the founding members of the Legion of Super-Heroes, and adopted the names Cosmic Boy (Krinn), Saturn Girl

By Matthew Brady

(Ardeen) and Live Wire (Ranzz).

When the three were presented to the gathered United Planets delegates, the new Legion was met with a less-than-enthusiastic response. Many delegates felt the Science Police, the UP's law enforcement arm, afforded enough protection, and that the UP should have more mature people filling the Legion's role. After the fledging Legion saved the delegates from a bomb blast at the presentation, many delegates changed their minds, and endorsed the Legion. During the investigation of the bombing, two superpowered girls, Tinya Wazzo and Luornu Durgo, aided the Legion and were invited to join the group as Apparition and Triad, respectively.

However, the Legion had made many political enemies; most notably, Ambassador Wazzo of the planet Bgtzl (also Apparition's mom, who didn't want her daughter to join), and UP President Chu, who had her own plans for what the Legion should be.

Unbeknownst to Brande, Chu had instituted the Legion draft, which brought together several new teenagers from various planets of the UP to join the Legion, including Brainiac 5, Invisible Kid, Leviathan, Kid Quantum, Chameleon and XS.

With the new members in place, Chu appointed Leviathan as team leader—much to the team's chagrin, as they had been comfortable with Cosmic Boy's leadership up till then—and sent them on their first mission: apprehend the spiderlike space pirate, Tangleweb.

During the confrontation with Tangleweb, Kid Quantum was killed, and the villain escaped. Ashamed of his poor leadership abilities, Leviathan soon handed Legion leadership back over to Cosmic Boy. The failure of the mission forced the UP to reevaluate the wisdom in sending teenagers to enforce UP law in the galaxy. During Kid Quantum's funeral, XS proved her worth to the team, and dispelled her own doubts about belonging, when she rescued the assembled Legionnaires and UP representatives from yet another bombing attack.

SECOND CHANCES

The Legionnaires were next sent to Earth's moon to rescue Leland McCauley, a shady industrial rival of Brande's, from a man named Mano, a lone survivor of a war that McCauley supplied. After a battle, the Legion captured Mano, and reluctantly remanded him to McCauley's custody. Upon their return to Earth, President Chu informed the Legion that Live Wire, still legally listed as a runaway, had been replaced by another representative from Winath: his twin sister, Ayla. Ayla adopted the name Spark, and shortly thereafter, Live Wire quit the Legion following a destructive battle with the mysterious Ultra Boy.

Ultra Boy convinced Live Wire to join Work Force, a superteam modeled after the Legion, and funded by Leland McCauley. Garth joined without hesitation.

On a mission to "Planet Hell," a shielded prison asteroid positioned inside a star, the Legion and Work Force joined forces to fight off thousands of criminals while Brainiac 5 feverishly worked to repair the prison's shielding. Escaping death by mere seconds, an alliance was formed between the two groups.

In a second membership drive, the team added Kinetix, Shrinking Violet and Andromeda.

THE DAXAM WAR

Meanwhile, the White Triangle, a group of genetic purists, had begun attacking members of alien races they considered "impure," including a bold attack on Triad.

The White Triangle attacks came to a violent head when it was revealed that they were being masterminded by the UP ambassador from Daxam named Roxxas, and carried out by four mad Daxamites. Utilizing abilities that are equal to that of Superman,

LEGION ROLL CALL

Andromeda—Has invulnerability, super-strength, flight, heat vision, X-ray vision.

Brainiac 5—Has a 12th level intelligence and is considered one of the smartest being in the universe—if not *the* smartest.

Chameleon—Can shapeshift into anything and gain its abilities.

Cosmic Boy—Has magnetic powers.

Element Lad—Can change the structure of something into something else at the atomic level.

Gates—Has teleportation powers.

Invisible Kid—Um, he can turn invisible.

Kinetix—Has telekinetic powers as well as latent magical powers.

Leviathan—Has the ability to grow in size.

Live Wire—Can emit lightning bolts from his body.

M'Onel (formerly Valor)—Has invulnerability, super-strength, flight, heat vision, X-ray vision.

Saturn Girl—Has telepathic powers.

Shrinking Violet—Has powers that allow her to shrink in size to a sub-molecular scale.

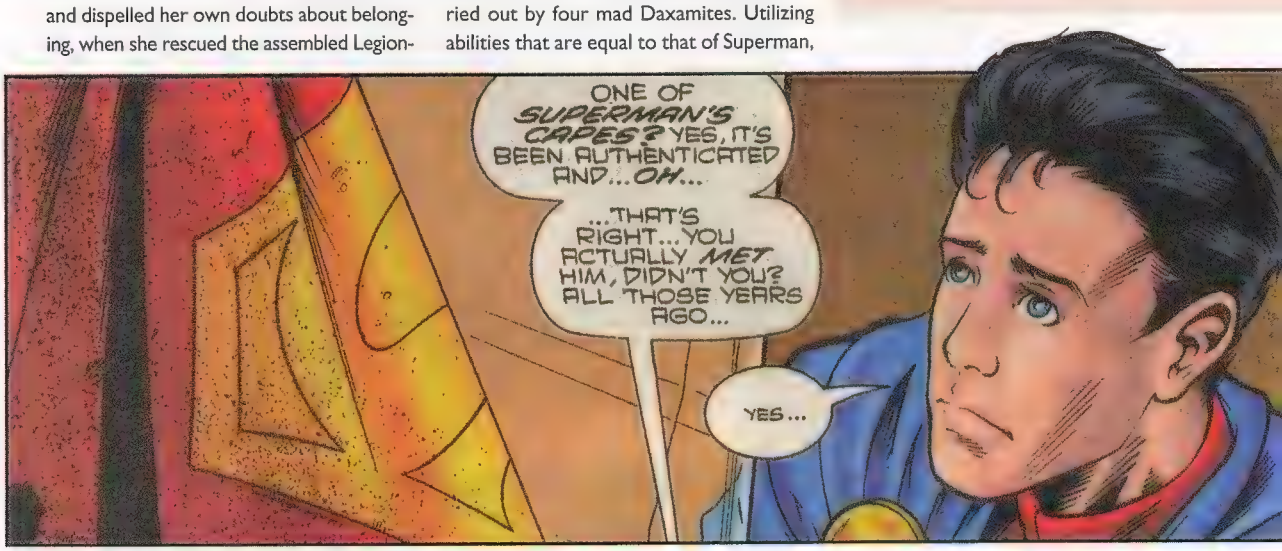
Spark—Can emit lightning bolts from her body.

Star Boy—Has the ability to make things gain tremendous weight using gravitational force. (He is still discovering mysterious new powers like X-ray vision.)

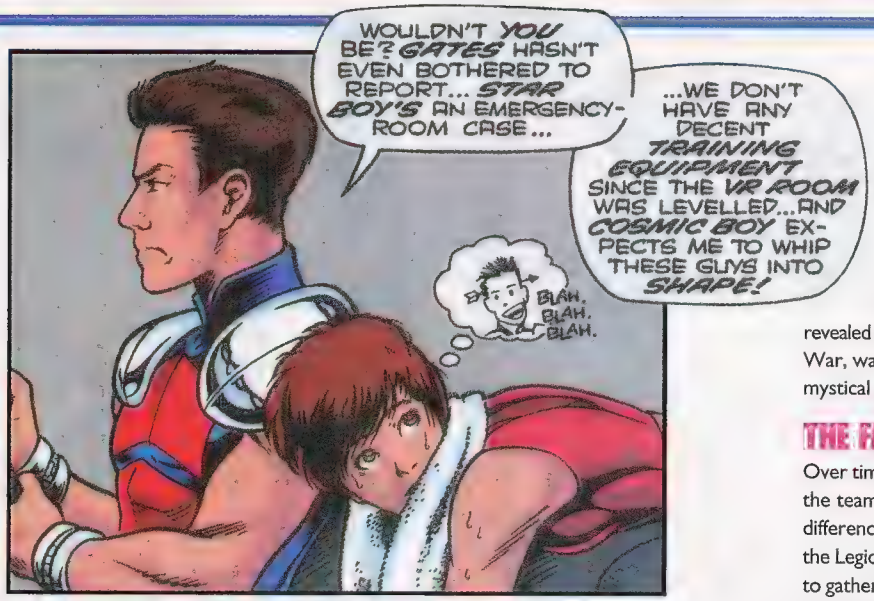
Triad—Has the ability to split herself into three versions of herself, each with her own personality.

Ultra Boy—Can be super-strong, invulnerable and super-fast, but can only use one of his abilities at a time.

XS—Has super-speed and reflexes.



M'ONEL FONDLY REMEMBERS AN OLD FRIEND



LEVIATHAN (LEFT) AND TRIAD ENGAGE IN DEEP CONVERSATION

the four murdered the entire population of Trom, home to a race of peaceful alchemists.

Their next target: Earth. The Daxamites saw Earth as the greatest source of the genetic contamination in the galaxy and attacked the planet. Only the combined forces of the Legion and Work Force stood in their way, barely holding their own, and the last-minute plans of R.J. Brande won victory for the forces of Earth. The victory was hollow, however, as Apparition and Andromeda were killed in what became known as the Legion/Triangle War. (As it turned out, Andromeda, a native of Daxam, survived but isolated herself in shame, feeling responsible for the Daxam attack on Earth.)

"The deaths really shook everyone up," says *Legion* and *Legionnaires* editor KC Carlson. "By the way, that story's not over yet. We haven't had a chance to see all the repercussions just yet."

THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

In the aftermath of the battle, the Legion's adventures became more personal, including Live Wire and Spark's search for their missing brother, Mekt. In a tragic family reunion, the young duo learned that Mekt's lightning powers had driven him mad. A battle ensued, and the twins combined their powers to defeat their older brother, but not before Live Wire lost his right arm in the struggle.

During these adventures, ghostlike images of the legendary 20th century hero, Valor, had been appearing in energy discharges in Legion headquarters. Brainiac 5 discovered that Valor was trapped in a phantomlike dimension, and the only way to get him out would be to re-create the device that put him there in the first place. The only difficulty was that the device had been destroyed. However, the plans were still in the memory of the 20th-century Superboy.

The Legion went back in time to retrieve Superboy, and thanks to some snags in the plan, had to pull Superboy back with them to the 30th century. With Superboy's help, Valor was released from stasis, and the Legion made Superboy an honorary Legionnaire in gratitude.

The Legion's time travel attracted unwanted attention from the 20th century, and they found themselves fighting against the time-bending villain, Chronos. Though the Legion won the battle with the help of Brainiac 5's time machine, Chronos' assistant, Lori Morning, was stranded in the 30th century.

Since unauthorized time travel is illegal, the Science Police arrested Brainiac 5, and quickly sent him to Takron-Galtos (he escaped later after figuring out the cell code). During all the turmoil, the Legion still managed to recruit two new members, Star Boy and Gates.

Also during this time, it was revealed that Kinetix, missing since the Daxam War, was on a quest for the Emerald Eye, a mystical talisman of incalculable power.

THE FATAL FIVE

Over time, the Legion's morale improved, as the team members learned to put personal differences aside to act like a team. Recently, the Legion was summoned by President Chu to gather the "Fatal Five," a quintet of genetically engineered beings created to battle the Sun Eater, a creature that devours entire star systems. With the Fatal Five gathered, the Legion was ordered to intercept the Sun Eater with the Five, and destroy it.

Unfortunately for the Legion, the members of the Fatal Five, once united, turned against them, and a fight broke out. During the skirmish, it was revealed the Sun Eater was nothing but a hoax. The Fatal Five would have murdered the Legion had it not been for the timely intervention of reinforcement Legionnaires.

The Fatal Five escaped, having been ordered by a mysterious benefactor to escalate growing tensions between rival planets Braal and Titan by bombing Titan from a

LIVE WIRE FINDS HIS LONG-LOST BROTHER, WITH DEVASTATING RESULTS

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(background art © Jim Lee)

Braalian outpost.

Splitting into teams, the Legion spearheaded each threat: The Fatal Five, the mounting Titanian and Braalian troops, and the search for the Fatal Five's mysterious benefactor.

And like dominoes, the Fatal Five fell, as war between Titan and Braal was averted. And it turned out that the mastermind behind all of this was none other than President Chu herself.

In the story's aftermath, Brande was appointed the new UP President, and the UP rescinded the Legion draft. Each member had to make their own decision whether to remain with the team or return to their homeworld.

One such member is Valor, who decided to gain special status on the team by remaining an active member and still have the freedom the roam the galaxy. Because of his legendary status, he decided to change his name to M'Onel so that he wouldn't be mobbed by cultists.

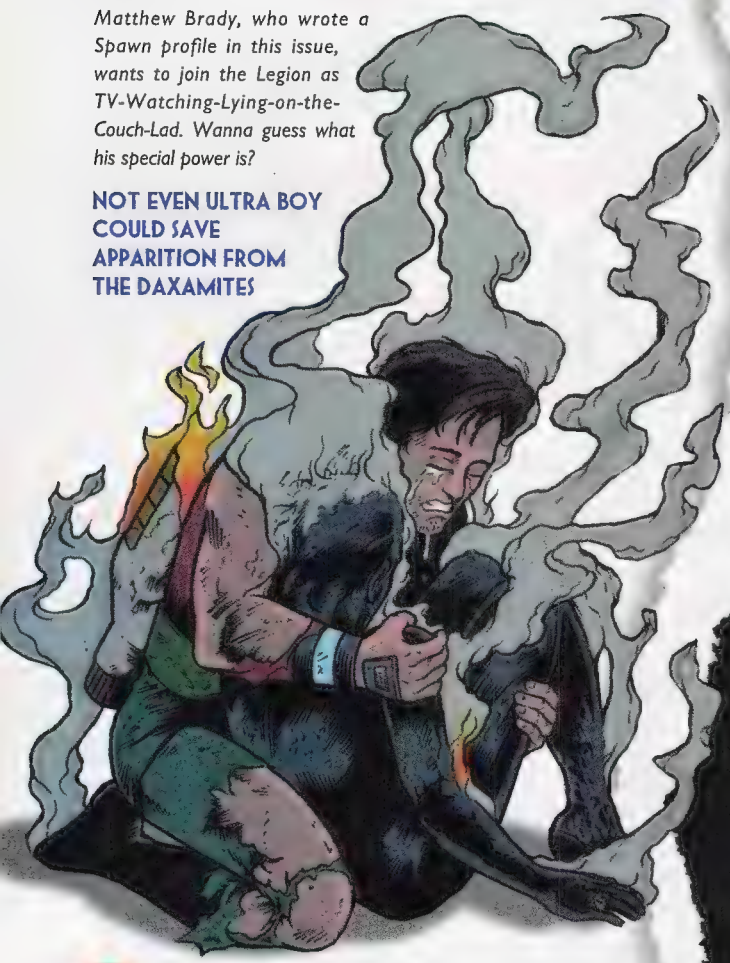
THE FUTURE

"After the UP storyline finishes," Legion writer Tom McCraw says, "the Legion will break out on its own. The stories will start to focus on individual members, and this will brighten things up a lot."

Future plans include the Emerald Eye playing a large role in the Legionnaires' lives, the introduction of Sun Boy, Dream Girl, and maybe even Mordru the sorcerer, and closer ties to the 20th–century DC Universe. "We'll be able to see the Legion knocking heads with other characters in the DC Universe, which is something that's pretty rare these days," editor Carlson says.

And as for storylines in the 30th century's future, *Legionnaires* co-writer Roger Stern says it best: "This is the Legion. We're set one thousand years in the future, and the sky's the limit. Expect the unexpected."

Matthew Brady, who wrote a Spawn profile in this issue, wants to join the Legion as TV-Watching-Lying-on-the-Couch-Lad. Wanna guess what his special power is?



NOT EVEN ULTRA BOY COULD SAVE APPARITION FROM THE DAXAMITES

Back to the Future

DISCLAIMER: What follows is terribly confusing, convoluted and annoying. We suggest you don't read it, but hey, we can't stop you.

The Legion of Super-Heroes you know now is not the Legion that existed from 1958 to August of 1994. With its convoluted history leading into the early '90s, DC felt the only solution was to erase the team's 30-year history and start over from scratch.

The beginning of the end for the original Legion can be traced back to 1986 when writer/artist John Byrne relaunched Superman, requesting that Superboy (i.e., Superman's adventures when he was a teen) never existed. DC agreed, and though it made for a much better Superman, it caused a major problem with the Legion. Superboy was instrumental in the formation of the Legion, so DC retroactively replaced Superboy's involvement with that of another character who was *already* a Legion member; his name was Mon-El, though now his name was retroactively changed to Valor. Confused? You're not the only one.

The final nail in the coffin occurred when *Legion of Super-Heroes* relaunched in 1989, taking place chronologically five years after the last issue of the previous *Legion* series, which ended its run a few months beforehand. This new era took place in a world where a disbanded Legion was regrouping to save Earth from the alien Dominators. And, to explain the retroactive removal of any trace of Superboy, after four issues the entire universe was destroyed and started from scratch twice during the first six issues of this new series.

The series eventually led to a couple of other things: a teenage group of Legion clones awakening in a secret catacomb and the deaths of many longtime Legionnaires, as well as the destruction of Earth, which resulted from 10 centuries of pollution.

It was all of the above that led DC to restart the Legion from ground zero. The baggage the Legion had accumulated was deemed enough to scare off new readers. "The continuity was so dense that you needed literally textbooks to figure out all the characters and settings. Plus, we were still at the mercy of 20th century continuity," says editor KC Carlson. "We decided to scrap everything, and start back at square one, more or less."

The last appearance of the "old" Legion was in *Legion of Super-Heroes* #61 and *Legionnaires* #18. We strongly suggest you start your collection with the #0 issues of each title—which began the latest relaunch—and then *Legion of Super-Heroes* #62 and *Legionnaires* #19.

■ *John B. Lacey & MB*

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FRANK MILLER

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COME TO THINK OF IT, THERE ISN'T MUCH HE HASN'T WEIGHED IN ON RECENTLY, BETWEEN HIS *SIN CITY* LETTERS PAGE AND HIS VARIOUS EDITORIAL COLUMNS. WHICH MIGHT SEEM UNUSUAL TO LONGTIME FANS OF THE EASYGOING, SOFT-

BY TOM RUSSO

"I DON'T REGARD MARVEL AS A CREATIVE FORCE ANYMORE. SO MY MARVEL-BASHING DAYS ARE OVER, BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING THERE TO BASH."

NAME: Frank Miller
OCCUPATION: Writer, artist
BORN: January 27, 1957, Olney, Md.
BASE OF OPERATIONS: somewhere in Virginia
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: *Daredevil, Ronin, Batman: The Dark Knight Returns, Batman: Year One, Hard Boiled*, the Martha Washington books, numerous *Sin City* mini-series, *The Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot* and co-creator of the Legend line with fellow writer/artist John Byrne.
WEAPON OF CHOICE: "A brush."

SPOKEN MILLER, WHO WAS ALWAYS SEEN AS THE STRONG, SILENT TYPE, NEVER GETTING YOU FIRED UP ABOUT MUCH OF ANYTHING. BUT THINGS ARE STRIKINGLY DIFFERENT NOW. FREED OF MARVEL AND DC'S SACCHARINE LETTERCOLS AND ARMED AT LAST WITH FORUMS OF SUBSTANCE, MILLER HAS BEEN SPEWING OPINIONS LIKE UZI FIRE, BLOWING AWAY ALL THOSE IN HIS PATH.

MILLER'S *SIN CITY* EDITOR BOB SCHRECK WILL TELL YOU (AND HAS, ON THE AFOREMENTIONED LETTERS PAGE) THAT THIS IS THE SAME OLD FRANK THAT INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS HAVE KNOWN FOR YEARS. BUT WHY THE CHANGE IN PUBLIC PERSONA? AND WHAT'S THE MOTIVE BEHIND IT? HERE, *WIZARD* BRINGS MILLER IN FOR QUESTIONING.

WIZARD: YOU'VE ALWAYS SEEMED LIKE A LOW-KEY GUY. WHY SO VOCAL ALL OF A SUDDEN?

FRANK MILLER: Well, I don't know how sudden it is, but what *has* been sudden are the changes in the field itself. The comics industry is really topsy-turvy right now. For a long time, there was a real code of silence, where if anyone said that things weren't as rosy as "Stan's Soapbox" made them out to be, they were considered heretics. But finally, the old brand name loyalty has been broken. And now that people are able to speak more freely and actually get listened to, big questions are being asked about our industry. That's a debate that I've enjoyed being a part of.

YOU WROTE A COLUMN RECENTLY UNDER THE HEADLINE "IN LOVING MEMORY, MARVEL COMICS, 1963-1996." HYPERBOLE ASIDE, WHERE DO YOU SEE MARVEL HEADED?

I don't. Entropy. I don't regard Marvel as a creative force anymore. I knew the people who made that company run, and now it's a bunch of old trademarks being exploited in various places by various people. They don't even call themselves a publisher anymore—now it's Marvel Entertainment. So my Marvel-bashing days are over, because there's nothing there to bash. I knew when John Romita Sr. left, it was over.

HOW HARD DID THAT HIT YOU?

It was symbolic because it meant that there was no longer any center. I mean, if you knew what Marvel was like back in the late '70s—for all the bellyaching I've done about Marvel's overall business practices, that was as exciting a place to work as you could ever imagine. We were all challenging each other, and the place crackled with energy. A lot of the people who got fired recently were friends of mine, and a lot of what I've seen dismantled is stuff that I looked at with great affection. When I wrote that eulogy, I was sincere.

YOU ALSO CAME OUT PRETTY HARSHLY AGAINST JIM LEE AND ROB LIEFELD'S DEAL WITH MARVEL.

It was disappointing and sad that Jim and Rob went running back to Marvel, because they had caused such a ruckus about how they were breaking away and creating something new with Image Comics. It's not something that makes me angry, it's just very disappointing. It was mainly for selfish reasons that I felt motivated to comment. I felt like I'd made a fool of myself by standing up for those guys.

ACTUALLY, THOUGH, YOU HAD GOTTEN ON IMAGE COMICS ALREADY FOR TAKING A FACTORY APPROACH TO COMICS.

I've always thought that the real comics renaissance would come when conditions were good enough that people could throw themselves body and soul into their projects, and make comics as personal, as quality a medium as they can be. So to me, it was very disheartening to see that, come the revolution, it was just "meet the new boss, same as the old boss." I mean, would you want to see Jeff Smith's *Bone* done by three other people? Would you want to see *Sin City* done by three other people? There are a million different ways to make comics, but I think that for our generation to really become the Wallace Woods and Jack Kirbys of our time, we have to keep the ink under our fingernails. I just wish the guys would spend more of their time doing their own comics and less time playing the mogul.

AND YOU REALLY DON'T SEE ANY GOOD AT ALL COMING FROM THE MARVEL DEAL?

I don't know. Mostly I fear for those guys—climbing onto the deck of the Titanic isn't exactly the way to save yourself. I built my career working on characters that were created in the '30s and the '60s, so I can't begrudge anybody else doing that. But I think that Jim and Rob are both capable of doing stuff that's much more progressive. Those old characters have a lot of charm, but there comes a time where we've got to stop being kids about this and start taking the industry in some kind of new direction. Stan Lee and Jack Kirby didn't come in and say, "Let's find a way to perform CPR on old characters one more time," they made up new ones.

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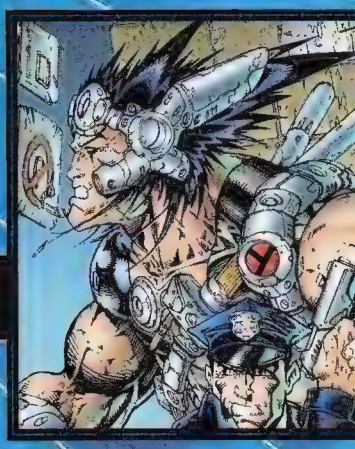

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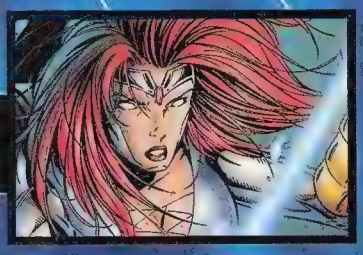

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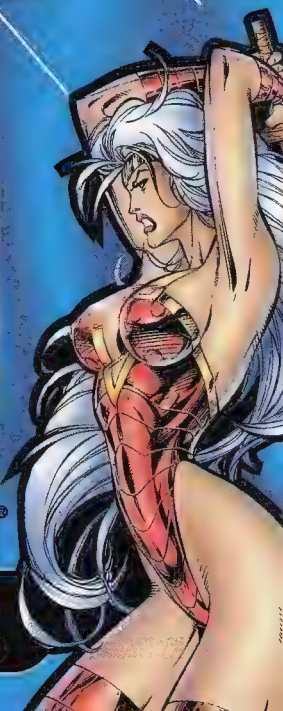

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SPEAKING OF STAN—LET'S.

First off, just to be clear, Stan Lee is a friend of mine. And he's also a writer I admire greatly. As a matter of fact, when I was writing *The Big Guy*, I pulled a whole bunch of old Stan Lee comics in order to learn tricks from the master because it was a very difficult book to write. As far as what went on with Stan and Jack and Marvel Comics, I wasn't there. You know my feelings about Kirby—they're kind of a matter of public record. [*Laughs*] [*EDITOR'S NOTE: Miller has denounced Marvel for its poor treatment of Kirby by not appropriately compensating him for his contributions to the publisher and on the issue of Marvel not returning early artwork drawn by him.*] But I've also got to say that while I regard Kirby as the giant of our industry's history, that doesn't mean I'm saying that Stan didn't do anything. That polarization always bothers me. Whenever you publicly disagree with anybody in comic book-land, the question you're always asked is, "Why do you hate so-and-so?" It may not be personal at all.

DO YOU FIND THAT OTHER PROS TEND TO MAKE IT PERSONAL?

It's case by case. You know, we're all different kinds of people. I happened to grow up in a big family where we all argued a lot, so I'm used to shooting my mouth off. But generally, I think that people are now speaking much more plainly to one another, because the current market crisis has forced us to. We've got to take another look at things and figure out where we're going from here. And that means having some meaningful arguments.

WHERE DO YOU SEE DC RIGHT NOW?

Industry leader. They've made some pretty gutsy moves in the past few years for a company that's been around so long and has historically been so cautious. I mean, DC Comics publishes *Stuck Rubber Baby*? How the world has changed. As far as where they're going to take this, I don't know, but they have a lot in their arsenal. They've got what I believe are the only two characters that are going to last forever with Superman and Batman; they've got probably the best production department in comics; and they seem to have an increasingly progressive editorial attitude. I can't tell you what their editorial meetings are like, but they're doing a number of things right.

ABOUT YOUR OWN WORK THESE DAYS—WHY DO *SIN CITY* THROUGH DARK HORSE COMICS?

It mostly boils down to people and philosophy. When I was casting about for a place where I could take *Hard Boiled* and *Give Me Liberty*, I wanted to work with a younger publisher. I didn't want to have to negotiate from dealing with the crust of decades, and I think it's worked out well for both of us.

AND THEN CAME...LEGEND.

Oh, I wish we hadn't used that damned name. [*Laughs*] Now people refer to us as "the Legends line"—like we're declaring ourselves that. Gawd. But we wanted to get across the idea that what we were producing was new myths, new folk heroes and such. So people would know that, while we weren't doing the old superheroes, we weren't doing stuff that was deliberately off-putting either. It's a sensibility that's shared by the entire group. We're entertainers. We want to spin a good yarn and show you what we've learned to draw this week.

IF YOU AND JOHN BYRNE ARE SUCH POLAR OPPOSITES, HOW DO YOU KEEP THE GROUP FROM RIPPING APART?

Through dynamic tension. [*Laughs*] John and I have a certain amount in common—it has to do with what we think comic books are. And we can disagree like crazy about everything else—and we do. But I enjoy a good argument. I don't believe in group-think or mind control. I believe that I can disagree with people and still do business with them or have them as friends.

BESIDES IMAGE COMICS, WHAT DO YOU AND JOHN DISAGREE ABOUT?

[*Sighing*] Oh, it goes on. For instance, John's got this dumb idea that cover labels are good. I just wish he'd go work in movies and see what a ratings system really works like.

DOES ANYONE ELSE IN THE GROUP MIX IT UP THIS WAY?

I think we're the two loudmouths. That's why we always end up with columns. The rest of them have better sense. [*Laughs*]

JOHN CALLS TODD McFARLANE "TODDLER," YET YOU RESPECT THE GUY ENOUGH TO HAVE COLLABORATED WITH HIM TWICE ON *SPAWN*. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF TODD WERE SOMEHOW NOMINATED FOR LEGEND MEMBERSHIP?

I will gleefully leave that answer to John.

GIVE US THE ARTIST'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE OTHER GUYS IN THE GROUP AND WHAT MAKES YOU PROUD TO HANG OUT A SHINGLE WITH THEM. HOW ABOUT ART ADAMS?

He's already established as a premier artist in the field, but what strikes me most is that his *writing* is the work of a seven-year veteran, not a novice. It's witty and smooth as silk.

MIKE ALLRED.

His career is fascinating because he's not someone who was slugged on *Legion of Super-Heroes* for five years until he finally earned the right to do something that the company ended up owning anyway. He's mindful of comics tradition, but he's really got his own kitschy, peculiar way of looking at things. *Madman* is a kick-and-a-half.

PAUL CHADWICK.

The way he's reinterpreted the superhero is quite literally something nobody else could have done because it's such an extension of his own personality. He created the ruminating, pondering superhero, and somehow made it fascinating.

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MILLER ON TAP

Frank Miller can't say exactly what his publishing schedule will be for the rest of 1996—a key point in the Legend imprint's unwritten charter is that no projects are put on the Dark Horse slate until they're well under way—but don't look for his hands to come clean of ink anytime soon. Instead, count on more *Sin City* and, to paraphrase a certain disgruntled Brady sibling, Martha, Martha, Martha!

Miller's next tale of the Town Without Pity is an as-yet-untitled one-shot set before World War II. He anticipates the book will come in at 64 or 72 pages, and will be in stores late this year. Another extended *Sin City* series will follow in 1997. Meanwhile, Miller is already scripting *Martha Washington Saves the World*, which he figures he and Dave Gibbons will deliver late this year or early next. A *Big Guy* follow-up is also in the works, but awaits an opening in Geof Darrow's schedule. And for DC, Miller is contributing new artwork for an upcoming 10th Anniversary edition of *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, and is designing a cold-cast statue for it!

Sin City and Martha notwithstanding, Miller may deliver his most-anticipated sequel yet at the trade expo portion of this summer's San Diego Comic Con, where he's been tapped as keynote speaker. Shockwaves are still being felt from Miller's famously impassioned speech two years ago at the Diamond Distributors seminar, and as his subsequent columns and editorials have borne witness, he's got a lot more to say. In fact, don't be surprised if Miller's work eventually spills off the graphic novel shelf and into the non-fiction section of your local Barnes & Noble. He admits that he's planning to talk to Dark Horse about compiling his various reflections on the industry in book form. "I can't judge the effect it might have," Miller says. "I usually publish something because I'd like to, because of ego, that kind of thing. But this is an amazing historical time, and it could use some documenting." *TR*

GEOF DARROW—

—must be destroyed. He puts us on our toes, because he quite literally draws *every single thing*. There's no fudging there. He brings the most legitimate European sensibility to comics that I've seen.

DAVE GIBBONS.

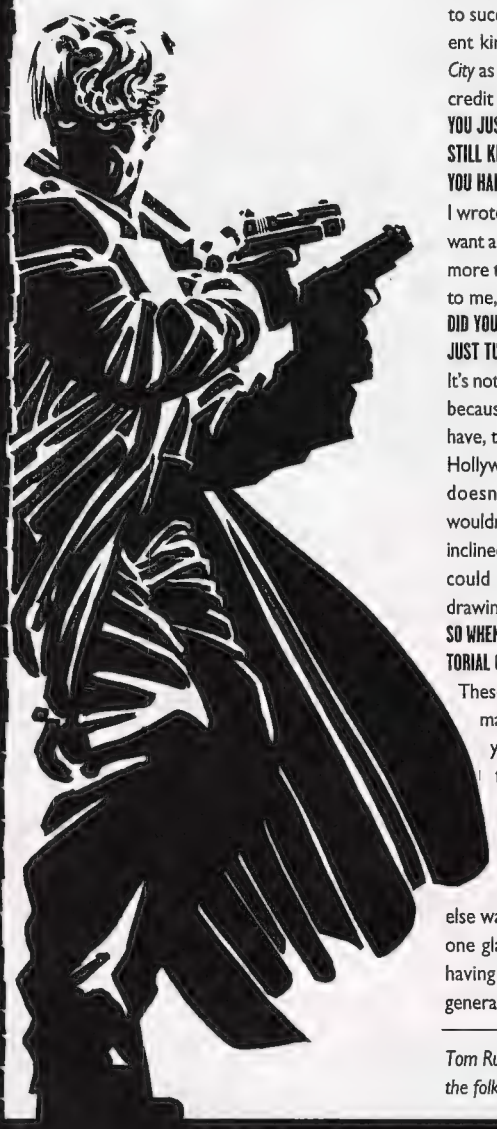
I can throw him any preposterous scenario and he will deliver it with such a straight face and such perfection that you won't even realize you're looking at something so silly. He suckers the reader—and the writer, in some cases—into going along with scenes and characters that they never would otherwise. He's like a ninja among comics artists.

MIKE MIGNOLA.

Frightening. I think *Hellboy* is the best horror comic of the decade. It's scary, creepy, funny and its sense of pacing is remarkable. He and I are in a dead heat to see who can use more black ink per page.

WALT SIMONSON.

He creates a world where everything is of a piece—his stuff never looks overly photo-referenced or derivative. He's known as a composition and storytelling guy, but for sheer drawing, he can't be beat.



GARY GIANNI.

I've only met him once, and I don't know him all that well yet, but like the rest of the Legend guys, his stuff looks nothing like anybody else's in the group. And I understand he's writing a new series for Geof, so the Legend free-for-all continues. [*Laughs*]

ANY OTHER CREATORS OR BOOKS YOU'RE ESPECIALLY HIGH ON THESE DAYS?

Bone. What a gift Jeff Smith has for timing a gag, for engaging you and for making your eye do just what he wants it to. And Steve Bissette's *Tyrant*. It's the life story of a tyrannosaurus rex, and he's researched it like crazy, but it never stops being fun. You still know you're reading a story about the biggest dragons there ever were.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR IMITATORS?

I don't want to rail on the folks who are aping the *Sin City* look, because I already did. [*Laughs*] [*EDITOR'S NOTE: Miller is referring to artists Jim Lee, Tim Sale and Mike Netzer; he criticized them in an editorial in* Sin City: The Big Fat Kill *#1*.] And I haven't seen as much of it lately. But I would like to go out of my way on behalf of David Lapham and say that *Stray Bullets* is *not* a rip-off. It may be that *Sin City* helped it in terms of allowing a crime comic to succeed, but he's going for a completely different kind of drama, and it's as different from *Sin City* as *The Incredible Hulk* is. David deserves more credit than that.

YOU JUST MOVED BACK EAST FROM L.A., BUT ARE YOU STILL KEEPING A HAND IN HOLLYWOOD? THERE WAS WORD YOU HAD WRITTEN A *SIN CITY* SCRIPT.

I wrote a script, but I changed my mind and don't want a movie made. Hollywood tends to want a lot more than I'm willing to give. This one's too close to me, and I can't let it go.

DID YOUR EXPERIENCE WRITING THE "ROBOCOP" SEQUELS JUST TURN YOU OFF COMPLETELY?

It's not hostility toward Hollywood. I do think that, because of this inferiority complex that comics have, they're selling themselves out real cheap to Hollywood without much to show for it. But that doesn't mean that I despise Hollywood and wouldn't work there again. Right now I'm just not inclined to because I can't imagine anything that could give me more pleasure than writing and drawing *Sin City*.

SO WHEN SHOULD WE EXPECT THAT GLOWINGLY POSITIVE EDITORIAL ON ALL THE THINGS THAT MAKE YOU LOVE COMICS?

These days, if you say, "Things stink, but we can make them better," people always say, "Oh, you're being so negative." As a matter of fact, I thought my piece on Marvel was rather positive in a broader sense, because it talked about all those cool times. I see myself as the starry-eyed optimist in this industry right now. Back when everybody else was smiling during that false boom, I was the one glaring. And now I'm clicking my heels and having a great time, because I think this is our generation's opportunity to really haul ass. W

Tom Russo is based in Sin City—he just calls it L.A. so the folks back home won't worry.

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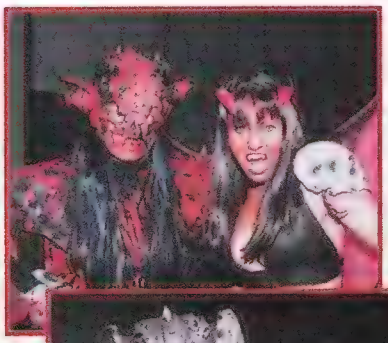

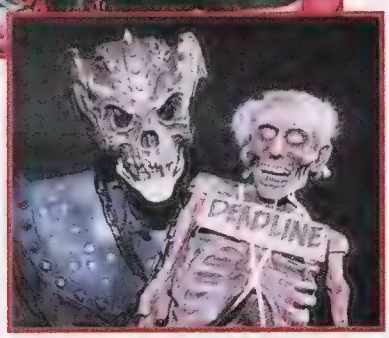

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For the name of the winner, available after August 30, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Send Me to Purgatori! Winner, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

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Basic Training

this month's host: Jimmy Palmiotti

How to Ink a Comic Book—Part Two

For the exciting conclusion to our demonstration, I'll be showing you how to ink backgrounds, as well as neat little tricks that will help make your work look more professional. So, without further ado, let's get started with a tip you should be aware of...

Pro Inker Helpful Hint:

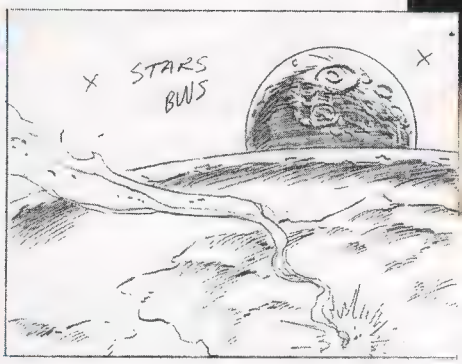
It is not an inker's job to add mood or texture to the page. That's the penciler's job, unless he has any specific directions for the inker. By rights, I have no reason to change the penciler's work. That's why I get a lot of work, and some inkers don't. Your job as an inker is to separate, clarify or correct the artwork (like, for example, if sometimes there's an additional finger).

Unless there's a major problem with a piece of art, I will call my editor, or the penciler, before changing anything. Your penciler and your editor will thank you, with the editor thanking you by giving you more work.

Backgrounds

FIGURE 1

In Figure 1, I have a penciled panel of a planet, with something crash-landing on said planet. The pencils are tight, and in the background, you can see an "x" (which means a black area) and a "bws" (meaning "black with stars").



Staying true to the pencil work, I've inked everything using a brush. After that, I took a little white paint, put it on the end of a toothbrush, and spritzed the paint on the panel to give the effect of stars. I masked off the area that I didn't want to get hit by the white paint, and finished off the white section by using a brush. I use either acetate or paper to mask off the areas I want to leave intact, by cutting a piece to the shape of the masked-off area.

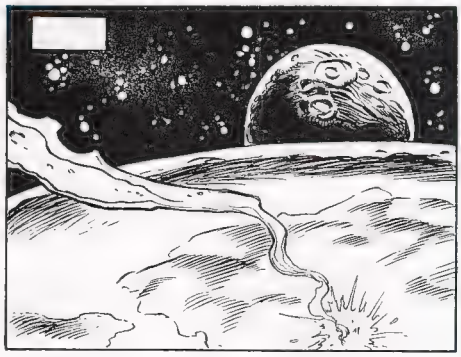
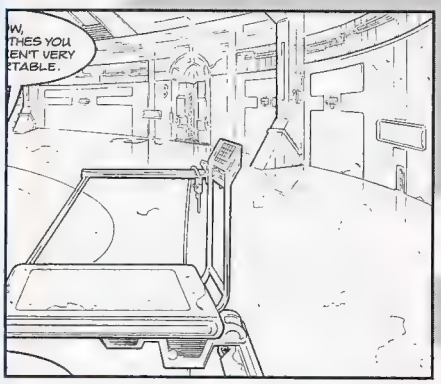


FIGURE 2

This is a fairly simple shot of machinery. I left this drawing open for color. In the foreground we have this piece of machinery, with the thicker line to indicate the foreground. As we go back in this panel, you'll notice the lines getting thinner and thinner. This gives the illusion of depth. It's a very basic example, but it pops in black-and-white.



The foreground is a fire escape with a hand on it. As we look down, we can see the car. Because the black in the foreground is right in our face, the simple line weight in the background makes our eye travel to see the car in the background.

FIGURE 3

We have a guy with his hands on a motorcycle; this panel features rich, detailed blacks. As our eye travels to the background, I made the lines thinner and thinner into the background. This gives an illusion of a city. These are nuances you may not notice when reading a comic, but you have to pay close attention to when you're inking.

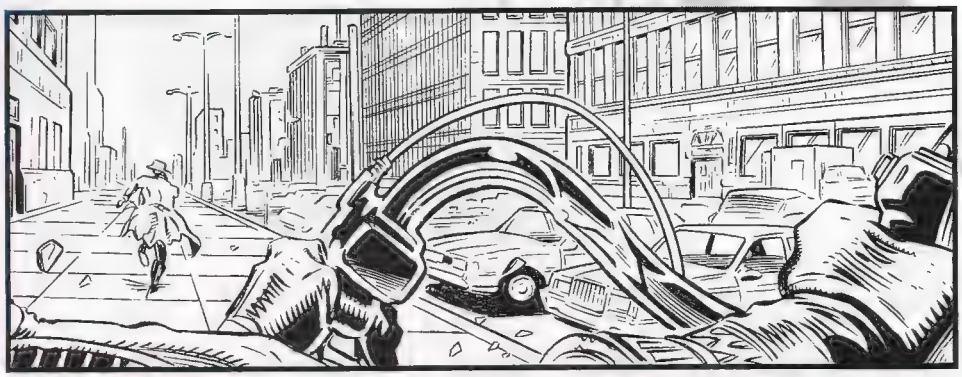


FIGURE 4

As you can see, this is just a simple silhouette of an airplane. On this example I used a pen, and scribbled in the lines, until I got to where the edge of the moon would be. I used a circle template to outline the moon, put the scribbled lines in, then erased my circle. As a black-and-white piece, it stands out fairly well, and when colored will really pop.

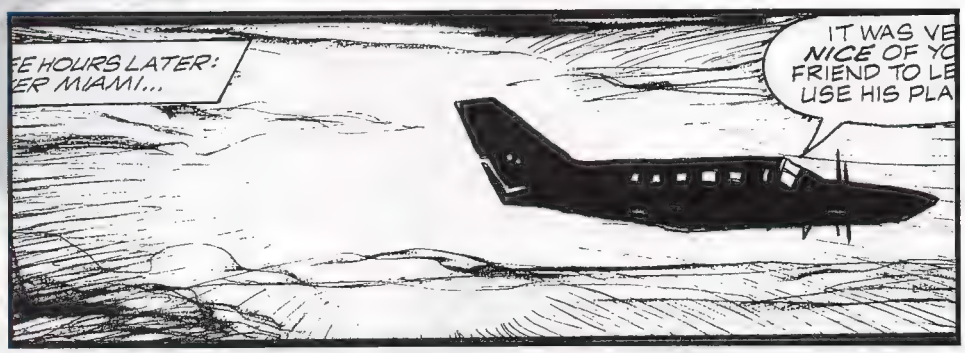


FIGURE 5

JIMMY'S TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Here's what you need for this month's part of the demonstration. All the following equipment you can find in a good art supply store.

• **Jet Black India Ink**—I've been using Faber-Castell's Black Magic brand lately. Ink (not unlike a woman) is very temperamental; you never know what you're getting. Two bottles of the same brand can have completely different consistencies. It's always good to test a bottle of ink out first, and try different brands to see which one you prefer.

• **White Paint**—I recommend Pro White and the Pentel Fine Point Correction Pen. These two will handle everything you need to in terms of whiting things out and making corrections.

• **Brush**—For me, it's a Series 7 Windsor & Newton Finest Sable hair brush. A #3 is my personal preference, but some prefer a #2. The #3 holds more ink, which makes the work go by faster, but some feel the #2 gives them more control on the page. I DO NOT recommend going to your Mom's watercolor set and using the brush in there. Just because a brush comes to a point when you look at it doesn't necessarily mean it's a good brush. There's a reason the sable brush is used by every inker out there—it's the best. It costs around $25, but it's worth it because these brushes can be used for up to a year. It's made of hair, so I clean it like I clean my hair—I shampoo it.

• **Templates**—Use oval templates, circle templates, triangles and a French curve set. These are very important, especially the ovals. You'll use the oval templates for every tire, kitchen table and speed line. Buy the templates that are raised from the surface, so that the template won't smear the ink you've just put down on the page.

• **Zip-a-Tone**—This is an adhesive, transparent plastic paper with a line or dot pattern of some sort on it.

• **X-Acto knife or utility razor blade**—Necessary for inking tricks and for cutting Zip-a-Tone sheets.

• **Misc.**—I keep a little dish with a sponge and water in it, and a paper towel or rag next to my desk. These are used to clean the brush and crow quill while you work.

Techniques and Tricks

What I'll show with these tricks are little details to indicate movement, shadows or textures.

TRICK #1

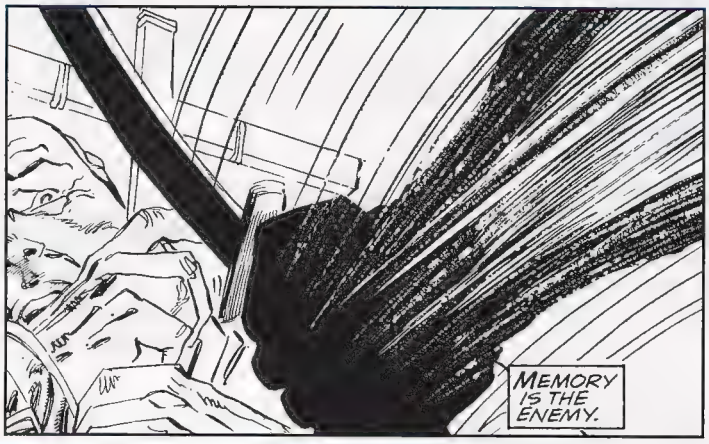
The white paint splatter. Here we have the head of Vampirella, and with her smashing through the window, I used the white paint to give the effect of more action happening. Just put a dab of white paint on the end of your brush and flick the bristles toward the artwork. You can't control the splatter when you do it, so it creates a very loose, spontaneous effect you can't get from just inking the page normally.

TRICK #2

In the background, I went in with a technical pen and drew the leaves. This separates the tree from the statue in the foreground, just by dropping your line weights as you go back into the panel.

TRICK #3

Here we have a hand swinging a sword. In the black part of the hand, in order to show motion, I went in with a utility razor blade and ripped into the paper. I also used some white paint, but I scraped into the paper on an angle. A lot of inkers also use this technique to show rain, particularly on a black background. Before trying this technique on a finished page, you might want to try practicing it on a separate piece of Bristol board that you inked black. This is a very effective technique to show movement. (If you don't have experience handling razor blades, please ask for help from your parents, an older friend or an art teacher.)



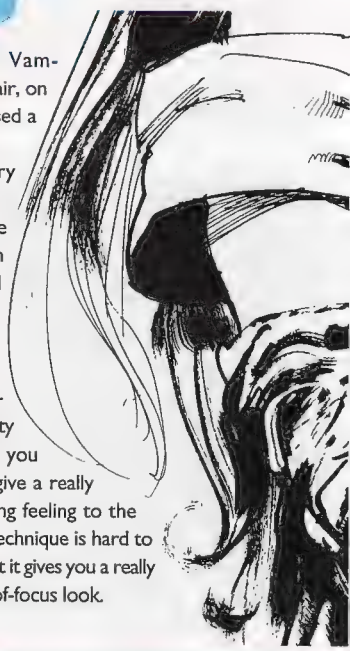
TRICK #4

This drawing was done on duo-shade paper. The shading around the eyes is done with this special type of paper. This paper is treated with the lines already on it, and they're brought out by using special chemicals. The "A" chemical brings out light lines, and the "B" chemical brings out a darker line. This is an old trick that isn't used as much anymore (this effect can be done with computer coloring, and the paper is hard to find), but if you're doing a black-and-white book (or a comic strip), this is a fun technique to use.

TRICK #5

To make the blood on Vampi's face look even more messy, gross and horrific, I used a toothbrush to splatter the ink all over her mouth. I didn't even use a mask here; I just splattered it all over. I also use this trick to show when someone just got hit in the mouth, as well as a texture trick for rocks and trees.

TRICK #6



This is Vampirella's hair, on which I used a technique called "dry brush." You take your brush and get rid of all the excess ink, essentially making it pretty dry. Then you use it to give a really soft-looking feeling to the art. This technique is hard to master, but it gives you a really cool out-of-focus look.

Zip-a-Tone

One more technique I'd like to teach you is the use of Zip-a-Tone. You can lay it down on the actual art, shape it with an X-Acto knife and peel off the excess. (You can even save some of the scrap for use at a later time.)

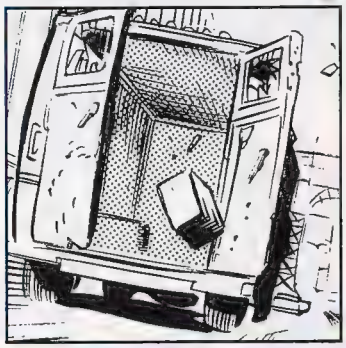
The initial problem with using Zip-a-Tone is that most amateurs use it as a technique to eliminate drawing deficiencies they might have.

ZIP EXAMPLE #1

I used a straight line 20% Zip-a-Tone on the back wall area to pop the figure laying on the couch. I then went in with some white paint to highlight the handles on the door. This is primarily a separation tool, to keep the background to the back of the panel.

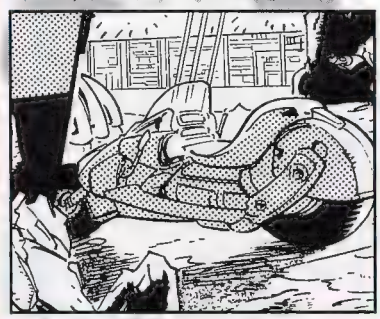
ZIP EXAMPLE #2

I used the Zips in this panel to create a separate plane in the back of the van. Again, I used a 20% Zip-a-Tone dot sheet, which is the right percentage to use when the art gets shot down for reproduction.



ZIP EXAMPLE #3

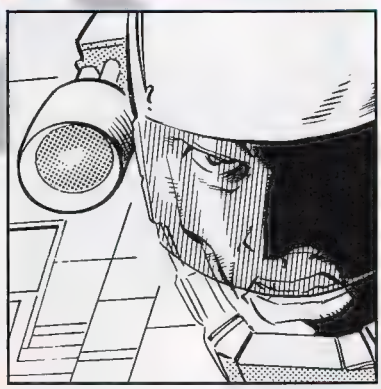
In this example, I worked with the Zip to create a light source. I used it to show the light on the bike. Zip-a-Tone always looks cool on mechanical stuff. Also, if you look at the top left of the panel, I also used the Zip-a-Tone as a foreground to separate it from the background.



Zip-a-Tone isn't really used in comics as much anymore, because many of the effects can be duplicated by computer coloring. Zip can, however, be an effective tool if you're doing a black-and-white book. There are other techniques like using sponges or different pens, but a lot of the effects are experiments you may want to try on your own.

ZIP EXAMPLE #4

In this example, I used the Zip-a-Tone on the visor, and then I used an electric eraser to dig into the Zip to create highlights. I also used it on the camera on the side of his head to make it look like there's light coming through it. (Don't push too hard down on the electric eraser—you'll rub through the whole Zip-a-Tone that way.)

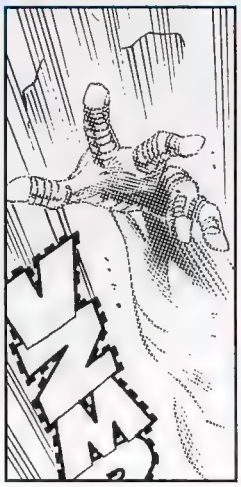


ZIP EXAMPLE #5

I used the 20% to produce tint on the glasses, then went back in with the electric eraser and gave it an effect of light hitting off the glass.

ZIP EXAMPLE #6

I used the white Zip-a-Tone as an effect to show the hand fading away. I used a 20% white Zip right over the inked area, and it gives the effect of the hand disappearing. Some people also use this effect to show someone behind glass.



Inking is a tough creative process to learn and master, but you can get better with practice (and more practice) and acquire a firmer grasp of your abilities. I'm never satisfied with any piece I do, because I always want to improve and expand upon my craft.

As a young aspiring inker, concentrate on improving your drawing skills. Your inking will be a big beneficiary of your drawing ability. I also can't stress enough how important it is to make your deadlines; that's a paramount factor when it comes to getting more work. Inking is a never-ending evolution of your talents, so always strive to go to the next level. If you see me at a convention, feel free to come up to me and let me look at your work. I'd be glad to give you a critique. Until then, keep your nibs wet, and your brush in a safe place. W

Jimmy Palmiotti, when not abducting midgets, can be seen inking his and Joe Quesada's Ash, along with a ton of other comics.

HOMEMADE HEROES

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES.

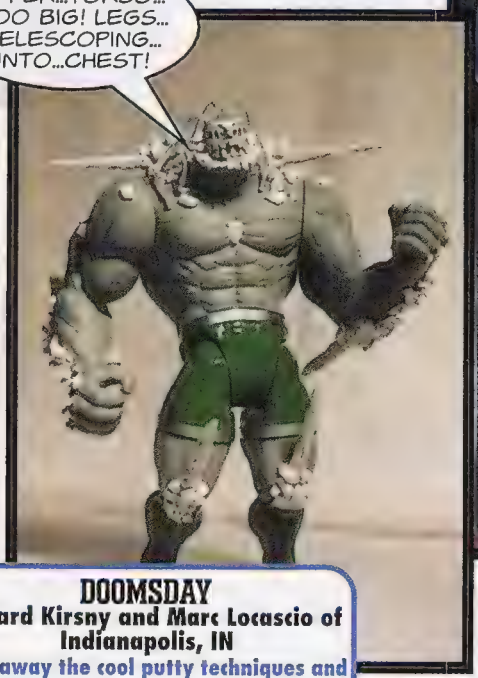
All of the following figures were made from plain old, ordinary figures (and some even from scratch!), and each of these gifted creators will receive a copy of *Hitman* #1 signed by Garth Ennis and a complete set of *The Crow: Dead Time* mini-series. The Runner-Up will get a Crow vinyl model kit in addition to the above goodies, and the Grand Prize Winner runs away with all that stuff *plus* a limited-edition The Crow cold-cast porcelain statue. Nice job, everybody!

Thanks to the folks from both Inteleg and Kitchen Sink Press for their generous donation of prizes. You guys are the ginchiest!

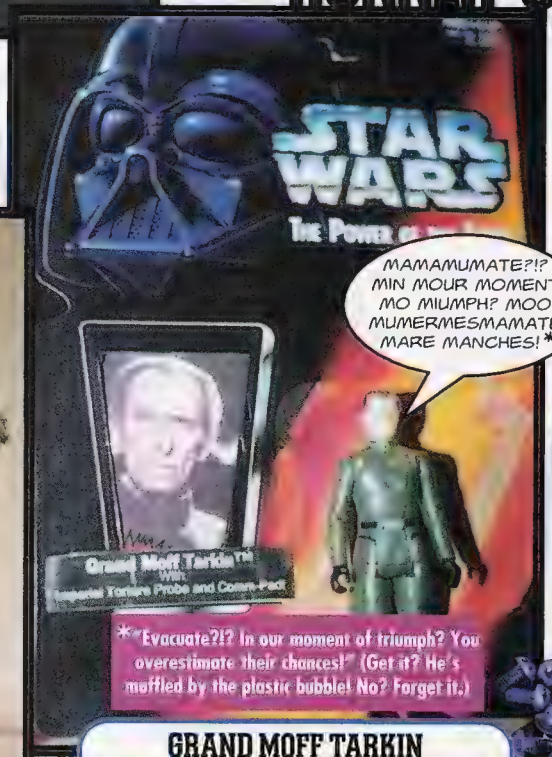
GRAND PRIZE

BATMAN AND ROBIN
Charlee Flatt of New Port Richey, FL
With hand-sewn costumes placed on Mego dolls, Charlee sculpted the heads to put the dot on the i for these figures.

RUNNER-UP



DOOMSDAY
Richard Kirsny and Marc Locascio of Indianapolis, IN
Take away the cool putty techniques and a paint job, and Doomsday's just a Playmates Maul figure!



*"Evacuate?!? In our moment of triumph? You overestimate their chances!" (Get it? He's muffled by the plastic bubble! No? Forget it.)

GRAND MOFF TARKIN
Stephen Etherton of Lexington, KY
This leader of the Empire was made from an old Imperial Commander from the original Star Wars line.

HAVOK AND POLARIS
Matt Sczepanski of Springfield, IL
Havok was crafted from a Toy Biz Sunspot, while Polaris used to be a Toy Biz Invisible Woman (the clear version).

CEREBUS
Tim McMahan of Evans, CO
This Earth-Pig was entirely handcrafted with a clay base along with some plaster. Sprayed with airbrushed acrylic paints, this is one fine lookin' figure. (Just don't tell Tim that Cerebus only has one eye now...)

LADY DEATHSTRIKE
Paul Herwick of Climax, NY
This figure was made from a Toy Biz Storm head, Toy Biz Kylun body and legs, Toy Biz Slayback arms, and hair curlers for the vest and hair. (Pretty neat, eh?)

HEY!

If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send well lit, clear, color photographs (No Polaroids, and put 'em in a cool or funny pose!), along with your name, address, description of how you created your figure, and your full phone number (including area code) to:

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Congers, NY 10920-0118

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- BEHIND-THE-SCENES SKETCHBOOK MATERIAL! SEE JOE LINSNER'S ORIGINAL LAYOUTS! SEE THE CHARACTER CONCEPT SKETCHES!
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THIS OFFER EXPIRES AUGUST 15, 1996—SO WAKE UP ALREADY!

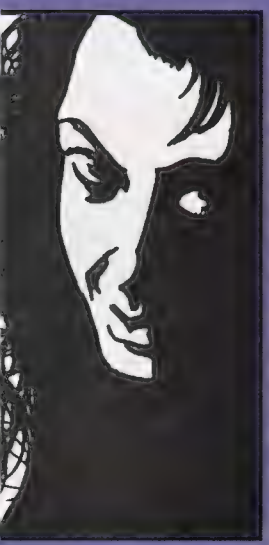
SIRIUS

a look at some cool stuff with an alternative twist

Moving Pictures

Brian Michael Bendis uses a real-life bounty hunter as the basis for his new crime comic *Jinx*

Brian Michael Bendis, creator of the critically acclaimed *A.K.A. Goldfish* series and the new bimonthly crime-noir comic *Jinx*, has done his homework. He's spent time researching his subjects. He's interviewed cops and real-life bounty hunters. He's studied conversational dialogue and film editing and lighting techniques. But the important thing is that he's able to pull all these sources together to make enjoyable and well crafted crime comics.



For Bendis, a 28-year-old resident of Cleveland, Ohio, creating a deep background for his fictional characters seemed like a natural thing to do. "I started putting these real things that I had witnessed or heard about into my fictional characters," he explains. "I wanted to go out there and start picking at people to see what they've got. People have unbelievable stories to tell you and they don't have any desire to create them for themselves. They just don't care."

One of Bendis' real-life inspirations came when he met a professional bounty hunter while working on an illustration assignment. He enthusiastically asked her to sit down for an interview, and she became the basis for the title character in Bendis' *Jinx*, as well as for a number of specific scenes in the comic. "She's been a wishing well of anecdotes and attitudes," he reveals.

Bendis' comics aren't just full of bounty hunters, though. You'll find your fair share of con artists, crooked cops and slick gangsters. The cast of *Jinx* includes not only the bounty hunter title character herself, but also the slick grifter, named Goldfish (from Bendis' previous series *A.K.A. Goldfish*) and his bad partner in crime Columbia. Goldfish's life of petty crime and three-card monte takes an interesting turn when he falls for Jinx. But no matter what these characters do, they all have one thing in common. They're not the usual generic types found in crime comics. Bendis is able to develop well-rounded characters that fit perfectly in his crisp, black-and-white comic pages.

One of the important things Bendis uses to develop his characters is realistic dialogue. Inspired by the work of screenwriters and playwrights like David Mamet ("Glengarry Glen Ross," "The Untouchables") and Richard Price ("The Color of Money," "Sea of Love"), Bendis pays close attention to the structure of conversations and what they reveal about characters. "A lot of comics, movies and plays have people talking at each other to further the plot along," he explains. "But if you listen to any real conversation, people talk to each other, people talk away from each other, they interrupt each other, they stutter, they say things they don't mean, they say a word five or six times in a row without realizing it.

"Conversational dialogue says a lot about the dynamics between the characters, and it also creates characters that talk and act in contradictory ways. When you talk to your mom, you don't talk the same way as you talk to your business associates or your friends."

Bendis' quest for realism also encompasses his artwork. He shoots a lot of photographic reference around Cleveland, and he frequently uses photos in the backgrounds of his comics. Other artists consider this a shortcut, but it's a very useful tool for Bendis. "If you're trying to get a certain feel or you have an idea in your head but can't get it on paper exactly, and someone could pose to show you exactly what it's like, then go ahead and do it."

Bendis also expands on the normal ways of shooting photo reference. "I used to just have people pose for me without any under-

Art from *Jinx*

by tom palmer jr.

standing of what their character was," he says, "but it always looked stiff. So now I write a script and lay out all the pages. Then I have certain actors who have been working with me for a while come over and work out the scenes or do improv scenes. I audiotape it and photograph it and go as far as I can to make it a little mini-production before I abstract it down to comic book form. I've tried to take photo reference a step further to make it a step of the creative process."

If this whole process sounds a lot like making a movie, then it reflects on Bendis' intense interest in film. Both *A.K.A. Goldfish* and his breakthrough series *Fire* from 1993 featured characters based on the likenesses of such familiar personalities as Julia Roberts, Candice Bergen and David Cronenberg. Also, the plot of *Jinx* is loosely based on "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," with the romance between Jinx and Goldfish complicating things.

Bendis has even studied documentaries like "Visions of Light" (a film produced by the American Cinematographer's Institute) and countless movies to learn editing tricks and lighting techniques. "A lot of people get geeky about the correlation between film and comics, but film is a sequence of images and a lot can be learned from looking at it. I study it all the time and I've yet to find the bottom of the well."

There's also another reason why Bendis is so interested in film. If everything works out, you should be seeing a version of *A.K.A. Goldfish* on the silver screen in the near future. The William Morris Agency is representing Bendis' projects, and director Gary Fleder ("Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead") has already been attached to a version of "A.K.A. Goldfish" that Bendis is writing. "So far, it's been very invigorating creatively," Bendis reveals. "It's almost like phone sex. They call me up and tell me what's going on with the studios and tell me how wonderful life is. I hang up the phone and I draw like a maniac. They can charge me $3.99 a minute—I'd pay it!"

But even though Hollywood has already come knocking at his door, Bendis has no plans to give up comics. "I sincerely plan on keeping *Jinx* out on a bimonthly schedule until I'm done with it. I really like making comics. It's not like lugging boxes or flipping burgers. I'm not even slightly bored with comics. Quite the opposite. It's a form of therapy." W

Tom Palmer Jr. has been forced to be a freelance writer against his will. Someone please help him!

The third issue of Brian Michael Bendis' bimonthly black-and-white *Jinx* will be on sale in July. If you can't find a copy at your local comic store, all back issues are available from Caliber Press, 11904 Farmington Rd., Livonia, MI 48150. You can call 1-800-346-8940 to get a copy of their catalog. Bendis' earlier books, *A.K.A. Goldfish* and *Fire*, are also available as trade paperbacks from Caliber.

Brian Michael Bendis' Recommended Reading

Brian Michael Bendis' current favorite comics include Mark Ricketts' *Nowheresville*, David Mack's *Kabuki: Circle of Blood* trade paperback, Vertigo's *Preacher* and Peter Kuper's *The System*. His all-time favorites are the complete works of Howard Chaykin ("He's one of my few comic book heroes."), Dave Stevens' *Rocketeer*, *Billy Budd*, *KGB* by Jerome Charyn, *Kane* by Paul Grist, James Hudnall's *Streets*, the Jimi Hendrix graphic novel *Voodoo Child* by Bill Sienkiewicz and anything P. Craig Russell touches.

Recommended Reading

• ***Breakneck Blvd.*** There's a certain charm about the urban drama of Timothy Markin's *Breakneck Blvd.* The rough situations that Frank Dunkard, the main character, gets himself into are anything but charming, but Markin has created a fascinating cast of characters and he has an excellent sense of mood and pacing. His artwork is tight enough to capture a wide range of emotions and situations, and loose enough to move the story along at a swift pace. While there is a continuing story in *Breakneck Blvd.*, you can jump in at any time, because each issue is a self-contained story. If you can't get it (issue #5 will be out in July) at your local comic store, then you can call 1-800-866-8929 or write Slave Labor Graphics, 979 S. Bascom Ave., San Jose, CA 95128 for a free catalog.

• ***Funnytime Features* and *The Hoon*** These two series from Eenie Weenie Comics are a real hoot. Derek Drymon is the crazed mind responsible for the adventures of Man-Myth and Inkblot in *Funnytime Features*. He has a cartoony drawing style that fits perfectly with his wacky storytelling. If you like your goofy superheroes realistically rendered, then pick up Robb Bihun's *The Hoon*, which stars a calzone-loving superhero in the title role. Both of these black-and-white comics are very enjoyable and good for a few laughs. For more information on both *Funnytime Features* and *The Hoon*, write to Eenie Weenie Comics, 3315 Carse Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90068.

TRAILER PARK

Wizard's column about Hollywood and TV and stuff like that

FERRIGNO SMASHING INTO HULK SERIES

By Rob Allstetter

After all these years, **Lou Ferrigno** is finally getting his chance to talk as the **Incredible Hulk**.

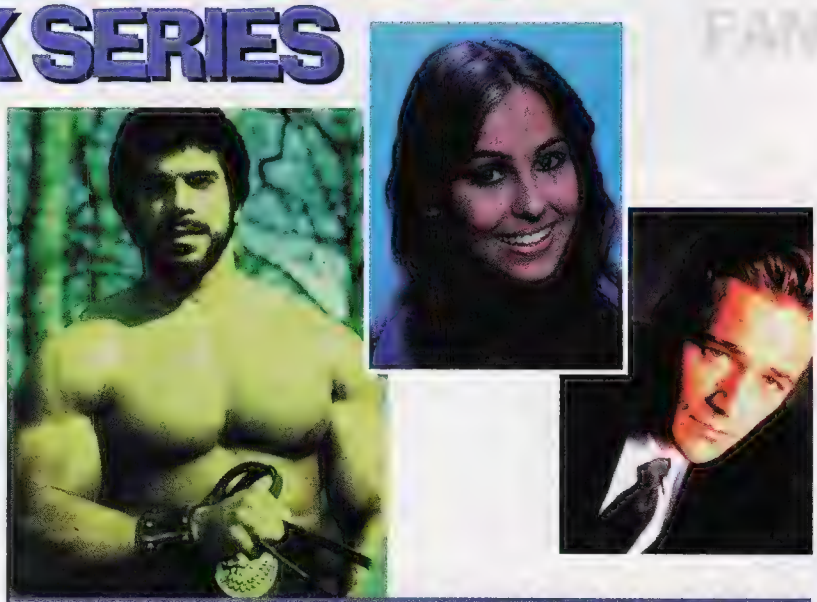
Ferrigno, a former Mr. Olympia bodybuilder who donned green body makeup, a wig and prosthetics as the television Hulk, basically growled his way through the late '70s/early '80s series' 82 episodes and three post-series movies. But now he'll be doing the voice of the Hulk on the new animated series from Marvel Films, set to air Sunday mornings on the United Paramount Network this fall.

Ferrigno, who is partially deaf, has also overcome a speech impediment during his acting career. He stated on several occasions his desire for the live-action Hulk to talk.

Like it was on his old show, Ferrigno's job on the animated series will be to capture the raw emotion of the Hulk, only now he'll have a vocabulary—albeit a limited one—with which to work.

"Our Hulk is even less intelligent than the savage Hulk," said story editor Greg Johnson. "We're not depicting him as the human hater that he was in the comics. He's a lot more limited as far as his dialogue goes; he barely says four words in a row. He's more of a victim and sympathetic character."

Neil McDonough ("Angels in the Outfield") is doing the voice of Bruce Banner. Other voices include **Luke Perry** ("Beverly Hills 90210") as Rick Jones, Genie Francis ("General Hospital") as Betty Ross, John Vernon (Rupert Thorne on "Batman" and Doctor Strange on "Spider-Man") as General Thunderbolt Ross, Matt Frewer (Russell Tresh in the "Generation X" telefilm) as the Leader and **Mark Hamill** (Joker on "Batman" and Hobgoblin on "Spider-Man") as Gargoyle.



FERRIGNO (LEFT) IS THE HULK ONCE AGAIN, WITH FRANCIS (CENTER) AS BETTY AND PERRY AS RICK JONES

Recording began in early April for the series, which is tentatively scheduled to begin on UPN on Sept. 8.

Frewer's Leader will be the main villain, appearing in about half of the first 13 episodes. Frewer also did the voice of the Leader in the episode of "Iron Man" (written by Johnson) in which the Hulk appeared.

Other villains in the first season will include Zzzax, Wendigo and Doctor Doom. Marvel guest-stars will include Ghost Rider, Iron Man, She-Hulk, Thor, Thing and Sasquatch. Doc Samson and Gabriel Jones, an agent of SHIELD, will be series regulars. The episode guest-starring Ghost Rider will also serve as a potential introduction to the Ghost Rider series Marvel is developing for UPN.

Sources told *Wizard* that UPN will give "The Incredible Hulk" a big push, perhaps airing the first episode in prime time.

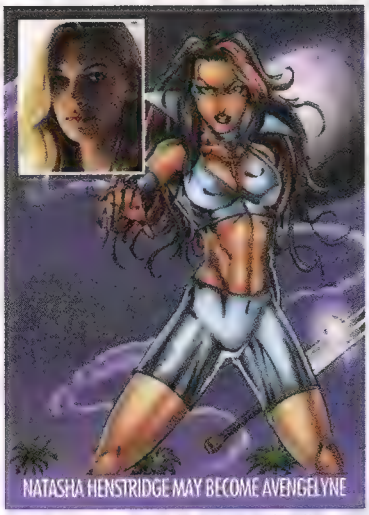
"It's definitely different than traditional Saturday morning fare," said Johnson. "The stories are big and small, but they have a lot of heart, more than you would expect from a Hulk show."

AVENGELYNE TO THE SCREEN

Rob Liefeld has yet another character in the movie pot. New Line Cinema has acquired the rights to **Avengelyne**, Liefeld's sword-toting babe from his Maximum Press imprint.

The project was brought to New Line by its director of development Brian Witten, who was Liefeld's production partner and still writes the *Chapel* comic for Extreme Studios. Liefeld, Witten and Kevin Messick will serve as producers for the film.

"Through projects like 'The Mask' and 'Mortal Kombat,' New Line has proven it can successfully adapt this kind of source material where others have failed," said Michael DeLuca, New Line's president and chief operating officer. "We have been anxious to work with Rob for a long time, and hope this marks the beginning of a very pro-


NATASHA HENSTRIDGE MAY BECOME AVENGELYNE

ductive and profitable relationship."

"Mike DeLuca and Brian Witten are genuinely inspired by comic books, and they recognize the effort and talent that goes into creating the storylines and characters," Liefeld said. "Their interest is not exploitative, it's creative, and I know that together we will develop a film that will move the genre forward in a thoughtful and exciting way."

Natasha Henstridge, who starred in "Species" and will be in the upcoming Jean-Claude Van Damme film "The Exchange," has been linked to the role of the heroine, although the casting process has not started.

Liefeld's other movie licenses remain active. The first draft of the Prophet movie, by Cyrus Vorus and Ethan Reiff, has been completed with an ending sources told *Wizard* is "explosive." The film is on TriStar Pictures' fast track. Doom's IV is at Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment, and The Mark is being developed by Tom Cruise's production house.

FRAKES NUMBER ONE ON NEXT 'TREK' FILM

As Will Riker on "Star Trek: The Next Generation," **Jonathan Frakes** often took orders from Patrick Stewart's Capt. Picard. But behind the scenes on the next "Trek" movie, tentatively titled "Star Trek: Generations 2," Frakes is in command.

After directing numerous "Star Trek" TV episodes, Frakes is making his directing debut on a major motion picture. The script, by veteran "Star Trek" writers Brannon Braga and Ronald Moore, pits the Enterprise and its crew against the Borg.

"It's the best script ever for a 'Star Trek' movie, and if I don't screw it up, it will be the best movie in the series," Frakes told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

James Cromwell, who earned a supporting actor Oscar nomination for his role as the farmer in "Babe," has signed to play Zefram Cochrane, the man who invented warp drive. Another cast addition is Alfre Woodard as a possible love interest for Picard.

Principal photography on the film began in mid-April for a Thanksgiving release from Paramount Pictures.

A VOICE IS SPAWNED

Keith David is doing the very deep voice of Spawn in the HBO animated series, tentatively scheduled to begin in November or December. David was recently nominated for a Daytime Emmy award for his voice work as Goliath in "Gargoyles." He also did the voice of the Black Panther this past season in "Fantastic Four."

"He's one of the most fascinating characters I've ever played," said David of Spawn. "I really like him and feel for him. He's sort of like Darth Vader fighting to get back to the Force."

KEITH DAVID, THE VOICE BEHIND "SPAWN"

Richard Dysart ("L.A. Law") is doing the voice of Cogliostro, and Michael McShane ("Brotherly Love") is voicing "Twitch" and Gareb (the bum). Recording of the first four episodes was completed in Burbank, Calif. in April.

Alan McElroy, who scribed the Spawn live-action film, wrote the first three episodes, and Spawn creator **Todd McFarlane** has written an episode; they may collaborate on the next two. Wild Brain Productions is involved in the direction of the series, and comic artists Greg Capullo, Mitch Byrd, Aron Wiesenfeld and Richard Bennett helped with the character designs.

"It'll be a dark and gritty Saturday night show, sort of like 'NYPD Blue' animated," McFarlane said.

HBO will televise a "Behind the Scenes" special on the making of the series before it airs.

Meanwhile, New Line Cinema has greenlighted the Spawn live-action movie. Production is expected to start in mid-August under the direction of Mark Dippe, and sources say the budget will be at least $50 million.

A production office has been established in Los Angeles, and casting is under way, while two expensive Spawn latex suits are being built. The suits will have the ability to move for the symbiotic effect of Spawn's costume.

GENERATING GEN13 A SLOW PROCESS

The Gen13 animated movie, originally hoped to be available on home video this fall, has a new target date: the summer of 1997. The film has fallen prey to a glut of Hollywood hirings for animators.

"Almost everybody that I've hired to work on the movie is now over at DreamWorks," said Kevin Altieri, who is producer, writer, director, art director and storyboard artist for "Gen13." "That has made things difficult, and the result is I'm doing almost everything freelance. So it's taken longer to do, and there's a lot more work for me to do—an insane amount of work."

Even Altieri's wife, Kathy, who was going to be art director, took a job at DreamWorks.

"I want ['Gen13'] to be done and out there, but there has been trouble trying to get people because everyone in animation is working so much now," Altieri said. "Freelancing is a different story these days. I'm not hiring any hacks. I'm hiring good people, and we're pretty busy. In my position, I cannot offer multi-year contracts with all the perks, which is what people are now getting [with the major studios]. We keep making this thing; it's just happening slower."

Glen Murakami did the original character designs for "Gen13" before moving on to

GEN13 CARTOON BUMPED TO SUMMER '97

BILLY ZANE AS THE PHANTOM

"Superman." Steve Rude contributed character designs for some of the movie's early scenes, and Australian Fil Barlow is also working on character designs. Shayne Poindexter, who designed the animated Batmobile, is the mechanical designer.

Voice recording is expected to begin soon, and although Altieri couldn't disclose any of the actors yet, don't be surprised if some Batman alumni are involved; Altieri directed 26 episodes of the Batman animated series.

"Gen13" will focus on Fairchild, with Freefall and Grunge also getting their powers.

Altieri's intentions are for a PG-13 film in letterbox format for possible theatrical release overseas. He said that depending on the distribution deal, there could also be an edited G-rated version.

And while admittedly feeling frustration over the pace of the production, Altieri is still excited about this unique project.

"This is my best work yet. The fanboys are gonna be excited. They'll like it—a lot."

BLADE TO BE MADE

Marvel may finally have a theatrical movie based on one of its characters going into production. New Line Cinema has signed British director Steve Norrington to direct the **Blade, the Vampire Hunter** movie. Norrington earned attention from his low-budget film "Death Machine," and is a special effects wizard who has worked on numerous European productions.

SNIPES TO BE BLADE

He has met with **Wesley Snipes**, the actor long attached to the title role, and it's possible Snipes will make Blade his next movie after "Executive Privilege," which is now in production for Warner Bros.

The "Blade" script was written by David S. Goyer, who also wrote the upcoming "**The Crow: City of Angels**" as well as the in-production "Enemy" telefilm for Fox. Goyer's connection with Marvel also includes scripts for a Nick Fury telefilm and Ghost Rider, Doctor Strange and Venom feature films.

Goyer is also doing production rewrites for "Blade," which could begin principal photography this fall.

"The Blade movie is an epic type of film," said Goyer of his script. "We approach vampires from the science-fiction level rather than the supernatural level. We explain why they need blood and what it is they need from blood. It's the opposite of the romanticized Dracula version. That's been done to death.

"It will be very dark and R-rated. New Line wanted to go to the jugular with this one. This is not tongue-in-cheek; it's very serious."

MARVEL UPDATE

Marvel has hired television veteran Larry Brody to develop **Silver Surfer** (Fox) and **Ghost Rider** (UPN) animated series. Brody's first big TV break was as creator of "Baretta," and he's written for numerous television series since, ranging from "Star Trek: The Next Generation" to "Walker, Texas Ranger." A source described Brody's writing as "very police story/science fiction-oriented."...Word was expected this month from Fox about whether it would include a weekly **Generation X** series in its fall lineup. Meanwhile, the Black Widow and Nick Fury telefilms have received "cast-contingent orders" from Fox, one of the first steps in getting production started.... "**Spider-Man**" webbed up a Golden Reel award from The Motion Picture Sound Editors. The series won in the animated TV specials category for the "Day of the Chameleon" episode, which was shown in prime time.

SHORT TAKES

"The Phantom," the live-action movie based on Lee Falk's comic-strip character and starring Billy Zane and Kristy Swanson, premieres in theaters on June 7....**"The Tick,"** nominated for three Daytime Emmy awards, was put on hiatus from Fox's Saturday morning lineup. Don't fret, though. It will return—at the latest—for a new third season next fall....According to *Daily Variety*, producer Ivan Reitman has hired Kimberlee Reed to write the live-action **Wonder Woman** movie for Warner Bros. Reitman said the film will steer away from the somewhat campy 1970s television series that starred **Lynda Carter**....Manga Entertainment's **"Ghost in the Shell"** grossed $16,000 with its March 29-31 theatrical debut in New York and became the city's highest-grossing single-screen exclusive. The movie, based on **Masamune Shirow**'s manga title, is directed by Mamoru Oshii, and features the music of the Passengers (Brian Eno and U2). "Ghost in the Shell" is being released nationally this spring....**Christopher Reeve**, the star of the Superman movies who was paralyzed after a horse-riding accident last year, will be doing the voice of King Arthur in Warner Bros.' animated movie "The Quest for Camelot."...*Daily Variety* reports that **Alicia Silverstone** is working with a trainer in preparation for her Batgirl role in **"Batman and Robin,"** the fourth movie in the series, which is scheduled to begin production in September. Meanwhile, director Joel Schumacher recently told *Entertainment Weekly* that her costume, just like those of Batman and Robin, will have nipples....**"Batman Forever"** scored six nominations in the MTV Movie Awards, to air on June 13: for Best Villain, **Jim Carrey** (Riddler) and **Tommy Lee Jones** (Two-Face); Most Desirable Male, **Val Kilmer** (Batman); Most Desirable Female, **Nicole Kidman** (Chase Meridian); and Best Song, U2's "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, Kill Me," and Seal's Grammy-winning "Kiss from a Rose."...Magician **David Copperfield** is suing Butterfield & Butterfield, the auction house from which he purchased a Batmobile for nearly $190,000. Copperfield claims that the car he bought in March was not actually from the 1989 film "Batman," but rather was one that was used in promotion only. The company is countersuing for money due....David Mack has officially signed with Galaxy Entertainment to develop a live-action **Kabuki** film....A **Maxx** movie may be in the works at Paramount, according to his creator **Sam Kieth**; more details next month....Turner Pictures is developing a live-action movie based on The Jetsons....**"Star Trek: Voyager"** has been renewed for a third season next fall by the United Paramount Network....Disney is producing a direct-to-video sequel to **"The Lion King."**....The Keller Entertainment Group is developing a **"Conan the Adventurer"** live-action syndicated series. There will be 22 episodes for the first season, and casting is just under way.

SILVERSTONE PUMPS UP FOR BATGIRL

Rob Allstetter, who also wrote this issue's preview of the Superman animated series, is up for the Avengelyne role.

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WildStorm Productions Presents...

The "Name the Players" Contest

contest

In terms of comic book universes, practically no one's is as big and exciting as WildStorm's. Ongoing monthly titles like *DefCon 4* and *Gen*[13], and the new three-issue mini-series *Brass* are chock-full o' excitement and chock-full o' characters. Heck, there are so many characters, keeping track of 'em all can be pretty darn difficult. But if you can demonstrate your knowledge of WildStorm characters, you can own 'em.

HOW DO I DO THAT?

Simple. Just fill out the attached scorecard and tell us the names of the members of the DefCon 4 team (all four of 'em), the Gen[13] team (all five of 'em) and the Brass team (who's just one guy and his name's Brass—hint, hint). Random winners who get them all right will receive...

...Swell Prizes

Grand Prize (1):

One reader will receive a piece of original 11-by-17 "jam art" by artists Richard Bennett, Mat Broome and J. Scott Campbell featuring Brass, DefCon 4 and Gen[13] characters, respectively. The Grand Prize Winner will also receive a booster box of yummy-scrumptious *WildStorms: Image Universe Expansion Set* game cards and single issues of *Brass, DefCon 4* and *Gen[13]* autographed by Bennett, Broome and Campbell. Not too shabby for just knowing the score, eh?

Second Prize (10):

Ten readers will each receive 10 packs of *WildStorms: Image Universe Expansion* cards and single issues of *Brass, DefCon 4* and *Gen[13]* autographed by Bennett, Broome and Campbell.

This contest is sponsored by WildStorm Productions, and we can't tell them apart without a scorecard.

Fill this sucker out, put it in an envelope and send it to: Name the Players Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Deadline is July 31, 1996.

The Legal Score

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, WildStorm Productions and their immediate families or anyone with big Brass...ah, never mind. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card and list the appropriate characters. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Name the Players Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Mares eat oats and does eat oats and little lambs eat ivy. A kid'll eat ivy too. Wouldn't you? **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by July 31, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected by random drawing from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Drawing will take place on August 15, 1996.

For a list of winners, available after August 15, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Name the Players Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

The "Name the Players" Entry Form

DEADLINE IS JULY 31, 1996!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

Brass: _____ DefCon 4: _____, _____, _____, _____

Gen[13]: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____

PICKS

WIZARD's list of must-read comic books coming out in June

WILDC.A.T.S #31

Writer: Alan Moore
Artists: Jim Lee & Richard Bennett
Release Date: June 21
Cover Price: $2.50

IMAGE Beginning with this issue, Jim Lee collaborates with fan-favorite writer Alan Moore, returning to his creations for about six months' worth of issues—and maybe longer. "I wanted an opportunity to work with Alan before he left, and this was my way of doing it," Lee says. "I'm looking forward to getting going on it."

The story flows out of Moore and Travis Charest's work on the "Fire From Heaven" crossover last month, in which the WildC.A.T.s battled the Gamorran cybernetic forces. Now, as the team returns from Gamorra Island, they become caught up in an all-out gangland war—and its origin has more to do with the team than they realize. These events lead to Grifter becoming the leader of the team, and another member being branded a traitor. That results in a shake-up, with some members leaving and new ones joining. "There's a whole bunch of stuff going on," Lee promises with a laugh.

Lee intends to stay on the book until Moore leaves, which will happen between #36 and #38. Lee's considering staying longer, depending on his and the new writer's schedules. He points to recent issues in which Charest and Dave Johnson each penciled specific scenes, creating a collaboration that solved scheduling problems. "I'd like to do something in that fashion if nothing else works," Lee says. "I love Travis' work, and I want to ensure he remains a contributor."

Lee's particularly looking forward to drawing Savant. "Her costume and the idea of a young, slightly obnoxious character who's been around for centuries appeals to me," he says. "She's a good counterpoint to her older sister, Zealot. But I also like the new characters Alan's introduced. It'll be fun to see the interaction between the new and old 'C.A.T.s."

If you like *WildC.A.T.s*, *Wizard* recommends you read...classic issues of *Swamp Thing* by Moore (his run was from #20-#64). For some cool Jim Lee team action, check out *X-Men* (current series) #1-#3. For the best *WildC.A.T.s* tales, pick up from issue #16 on.

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #83

Writers: Tom Peyer & Tom McCraw
Artists: Lee Moder, Michael Collins & Ron Boyd
Release Date: June 26
Cover Price: $2.25

DC COMICS "I like to tease Legion fans," admits writer Tom Peyer. "It's one of my favorite pastimes. I love to torment them like small animals." Needless to say, he wasn't exactly chatty about the dramatic events taking place in this issue. He only said enough to drive fans nuts.

This issue kicks off a three-part arc that continues into *Legionnaires* #40 and *Legion* #84. It focuses on the Emerald Eye, for which Kinetix has been searching, and a battle with a returning villain, Dr. Regulus. It also features "a key character who pays a terrible price."

So who is it? "I can't say," Peyer states. "But it's probably not a Legionnaire who is going to be widely guessed." That's not because the person is brand-new or underexposed, he teases. "This character has been around for decades. And as far as I'm concerned, this character will never be back."

This event has a long-term impact on the team, adds co-writer Tom McCraw. "The aftershocks from this event affect everyone drastically for a long time to come, as do the effects of the Emerald Eye's appearance." Adds Peyer, "We're not really big on doing events, like killing people off, unless it grows from the story. This does, and I think it'll prove that nobody in the Legion is safe." Oh, yeah, like frying Apparition in last year's *Legionnaires Annual* #2 didn't do that already, you heartless sons o'...ahem.

Fans who have avoided the Legion books because they seem too complicated or appear to have a long history should give them another chance, says Peyer. "We try to write them so readers can start with any issue and understand what's happening." Aiding that is the Roll Call box opening each issue, which identifies the members, and the fact that their powers usually can be figured out from their names (what a concept).

"This issue is a good example of what the Legion is about," Peyer says. "It's a team adventure with some heart and a lot of danger for these poor, young people." Besides, he adds slyly, everyone will want to be on board before issue #86. "That one's gonna change the whole status quo right up through #100," he says. "It's gonna be a pretty major event. Give me a call when you're doing the Big Picks for that month and we'll talk." You could almost hear him cackling.

■ Big Picks written by Craig Shutt

If you like *Legion of Super-Heroes*, *Wizard* recommends you read... *Legionnaires*, of course. For some more futuristic superhero adventure, check out the *Kingdom Come* mini-series, on sale now. (Also, pick up the *Legion of Super-Heroes: The Great Darkness Saga* trade paperback for some older, yet kick-ass, Legion stories.)

MORE PICKS

TITLES DENOTED WITH AN **MR** CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

AQUAMAN #23

DC COMICS Since Ripley and Co. are all gone ("Game over, man! Game over!"), Aquaman's gotta get someone else to help him fight the aliens! So in come Power Girl, the Sea Devils (Didn't *Crisis* erase these guys?), Arion, Tsunami and...Neptune Perkins (?). What the hell kinda line-up is that? Sounds like Aquaman got stuck with the sloppy seconds. By Peter David, Marty Egeland and Howard Shum. **$1.75**

AVENGERS #401

MARVEL Y'know, *Avengers* is a title that should be chock full o' lots of cool characters beating various body fluids out of cool supervillains, and that's just what ya get this ish! Gambit joins up with Earth's Mightiest Heroes to take on...Rogue and Magneto! Whoa! Ya better believe this has somethin' to do with that Onslaught character. By Mark Waid, Mike Deodato Jr. and Tom Palmer. **$1.50**

BATMAN #533

DC COMICS You thought "Contagion" was over, didn't ya? Well, it is, but Gotham City's still feeling the effects of that devastating plague. What's worse, Batman, Robin and Nightwing have left Gotham to search for the original source of the plague, while the Huntress pulls a Macaulay Culkin and finds herself home alone in Gotham. By Doug Moench, Jim Aparo and Bill Sienkiewicz. **$1.95**

BATMAN AND ROBIN ADVENTURES #9

DC COMICS It's a rip-roarin' catfight issue! Ya see, Talia (that's Ra's al Ghul's daughter. She's perty) is on a quest to capture one of the top scientists in the world (he also happened to be working for Ra's, but escaped). But have no fear, Batgirl's here (she's purty too, which is rare for a redhead). And if she has her way, Talia's gonna hit the bricks. By Ty Templeton, Brandon Kruse and Rick Burchett. **$1.75**

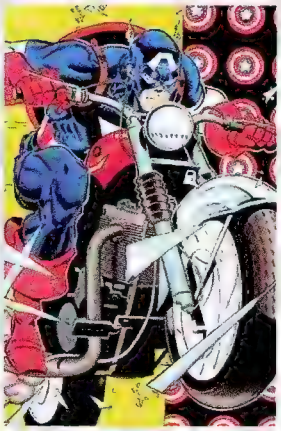
BATMAN: BLACK AND WHITE #3 (OF 4)

DC COMICS If you're in the mood to try something different but you still want a familiar face to make you feel comfortable, check out this Batman mini-series. Completely black and white, this series features some of the best talent in the comic pool today. This ish: Bill Sienkiewicz, Matt Wagner, Klaus Janson, Andrew Helfer and more. Just look for the Bat-book with the Barry Windsor-Smith cover. **$2.95**

AVENGERS #401

BATMAN/GRENDEL II, BOOK 1: DEVIL'S BONES #1

BATMAN: GCPD #1



CAPTAIN AMERICA #454

BATMAN/GRENDEL II, BOOK 1: DEVIL'S BONES #1 (OF 2)

DARK HORSE COMICS Hoo boy. The last time a Grendel came to Gotham, Batman got his ass whupped by Hunter Rose (a.k.a. Grendel). Now it seems that Rose's skeleton is causing a ruckus in Gotham and Grendel-Prime's looking for it. Hey...think maybe that human abomination Michael Jackson'll come to town to try and add Rose's skeleton alongside the Elephant Man's in his collection? Hope so, so that maybe Grendel-Prime can beat the "King of Pop" into jelly. Neato fun by Matt Wagner. **$4.95**

BATMAN: GCPD #1 (OF 4)

DC COMICS "Bad boys, bad boys. Whatcha gonna do? Bad boys..." This mini-series takes you inside the lines of the Gotham City Police Department. Get to know Commissioner Gordon, Sarah Essen, Harvey Bullock, Rene Montoya, Jimmy Smits, Dennis Franz and the rest of this motley crew. By Chuck "Chief" Dixon, Jim "Sarge" Aparo and Bill "Donut King" Sienkiewicz. **$2.25**

BONE #25

IMAGE Sleazier than Bush's campaign against Dukakis (Uh-oh, I think we just dated ourselves. No one's gonna think we're hip now. Darn.), Phoney Bone's got the town o' Barrelhaven wrapped around his stubby li'l finger. And when Lucius starts complainin', the entire town turns on him! Plus, Fone Bone comes up with the ultimate solution for the baby rat creature! By Jeff Smith. **$2.95**

BURGLAR BILL SUMMER FUN SPECIAL

DANCING ELEPHANT PRESS If you're familiar with that very excellent *Kane* comic (And if you're not, you should be!), then you know all about that Burglar Bill fella. Well, here's your chance to get the full skinny on him, as all of Burglar Bill's previous appearances (from some *very* limited runs in small press books) are collected in this one-shot. Plus, you'll get a brand-new story starring Bill's arch-nemesis: Constable Kelvin Flats! By Paul Grist. **$3.50**

MORE PICKS

CAPTAIN AMERICA #454

MARVEL Noooooo

MORE PICKS

Lantern), his poppa doesn't waste any time in taking advantage of his son's powers; he has Kyle put a "harmless" satellite up in space. Don't worry, good ol' Green Arrow doesn't trust Papa Rayner…and his suspicions break the two heroes apart! Concluded in *Green Arrow* #111. By Ron Marz, Darryl Banks and Romeo Tanghal. **$1.75**

HELLBOY: WAKE THE DEVIL #1 (OF 5)

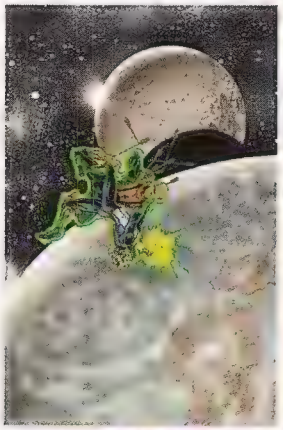
LEGEND/DARK HORSE Those same damn Nazis who were defrosted in *Hellboy: Seed of Destruction* are causin' trouble again (remember, kids: Nazis suck). This time, they've awakened the legendary nobleman vampire Vladimir Giurescu. So the Bureau for Paranormal Research and Defense has sent Hellboy in to hunt down the creature of the night! But he's in waaaay over his head! By Mike Mignola. Plus, check out the eight-page backup debuting Gary Gianni's MonsterMen in "Silent as the Grave." **$2.95**

IMPULSE #16

DC COMICS Looks like some ol' skeletons from Max Mercury's past are finally poppin' up. A shocking discovery from Max's time-travelin' past finally hits Manchester and endangers everyone he's ever had a relationship with, including li'l Bart himself! (Wait…Max had a relationship with Bart? Since when is this a Vertigo book?) By Mark Waid, Humberto Ramos and Wayne Faucher. **$1.75**

INCREDIBLE HULK #444

MARVEL Are you ready to rummmmmmmmmble? In this corner, weighing in at some ridiculous, only-in-comic-books amount, the Master of Disaster, the King of Sting, the Sultan of Swat: the Incredible Hulk! And in this corner, weighing in at 320 lbs., the Titan of Tussle, the Summers son, the computer-enhanced time-traveler: Cable! Watch these two duke it out in this latest chapter of the "Onslaught" saga! By Peter David, Angel Medina and Robin Riggs. David says, "If you buy only one crossover book starring the Hulk, it must be this one! Although doing crossovers is certainly logistically nightmarish, at least I'm having the good luck to work with quality people on this one like Mark Waid and Scott Lobdell, as we try to coordinate all of this and have it be one seamless whole, rather than some sort of patchwork. Once we have the awesome ramifications of Onslaught, it's going to have a major shake-up on the Hulk's future." **$1.50**



GREEN LANTERN #77

HELLBOY: WAKE THE DEVIL #1

KINGDOM COME #2 (OF 4)

DC COMICS A fairly irritated Superman lays down the law that all heroes must follow specific rules of conduct, or else they'll face the might of the newly reformed Justice League! While Lex Luthor and his Mankind Liberation Front plan to take advantage of the chaos caused by the impending superhero conflict, Batman must make a serious decision: join up with Superman's team or fight 'em! (Hey, Bats, we say you take the *Dark Knight* route. Go find Green Arrow and kick some Krypton-butt!) Awesome Elseworlds stuff from Mark Waid and Alex Ross. **$4.95**

PREACHER #16

VERTIGO/DC "Hunters," Part 4 (of 4). Paaaaaaarty! Jesus de Sade's known for his gala affairs, and his most recent party is no exception. Count on plenty of wine, women, drugs, animals (I feel really bad for any armadillos appearing in Vertigo books, by the way) and a few problems. While Jesse and his vampire pal Cassidy (who recently gave a cat a swirlie) tangle with Bob and Freddy, Tulip gets into assassin mode and plays pin the bullet on Starr and his goons. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. (Also check out this month's *Preacher Special: Saint of Killers* #1 [of 4] to sate your violent tendencies.) **$2.50 MR**

ROBIN #32

DC COMICS "Legacy," Part 2 (of 7). Great. Just great. That whole Apocalypse virus that decimated Gotham is now loose in Paris! Wait…is that a bad thing? C'mon, think about it: no more mimes, no more Jerry Lewis and we could probably sweep that whole EuroDisney fiasco under the rug.

WHAT I'M READING

name: **Kurt Busiek**

occupation: **writer of Marvel's *Untold Tales of Spider-Man* and Homage Comics' *Astro City***

currently reads:

"I love *Kane* by Paul Grist. The graphics and the black-and-white artwork are stunningly beautiful, and his character work and story structures are worthy of a modern Eisner. For straight-ahead superhero material that's always entertaining and goes places that you don't expect it's going to, there's nothing that beats *Flash*. *Savage Dragon* is always a hoot. Erik Larsen is clearly having a great time doing a character he cares a lot about, and the energy and commitment just comes off of every page. *Mike Danger* from Tekno: It's a terrific blend of the hardboiled PI and pulp science fiction that is so well crafted it just kinds of sneaks up on you over time. It's deceptively blunt; there's much more going on than you see on the surface, and the longer I've read the book the more compelling I've found it."

MORE PICKS

We say let the frogs croak. Shame Robin doesn't feel the same as he heads off to see if he can't help out them war-surrenderin' snail-biters and ends up mixing it up with two of his former mentors. By Chuck Dixon, Staz Johnson and Ray McCarthy. **$1.95**

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #41

VERTIGO/DC "Phantom of the World's Fair," Part 1 (of 4). Yeah! 1939. World's Fair. New York. Dead bodies. Sounds like fun! When the slaughtered bodies of a bunch of young guys are found near the fairgrounds, youse better believes that the Sandman's gonna start showing that gas mask o' his! Chilling stuff from Matt Wagner, Steven Seagle and Guy Davis. **$2.25 MR**

SCUD: THE DISPOSABLE ASSASSIN #13

FIREMAN PRESS It's another reunion as Voodoo Ben (last seen in *Scud* #5) returns! This time he's hired the luscious and curvacious Sussudio (He hired a bad Phil Collins song?) to capture our pal Scud! But what the heck's Voodoo Ben got planned for the Disposable Assassin? And just where's Drywall when you need 'im? And is it just me, or does Drywall talk exactly like Woodstock from those "Peanuts" comic strips? By Dan Harmon and Rob Schrab. **$2.95**

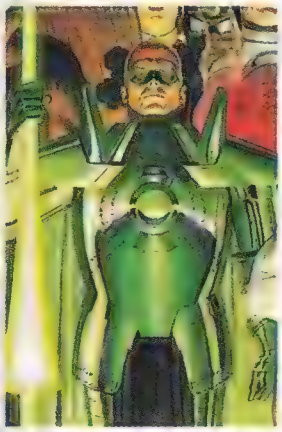
SIN CITY: THAT YELLOW BASTARD #5 (OF 6)

LEGEND/DARK HORSE Hartigan's a free man, but is he truly free? Nancy (she's the sweet li'l girl that Hartigan saved, and then was wrongly accused of kidnapping and raping) is in big trouble and there's some little punk out there chasin' them both down! Expect plenty o' action, cool Venetian-blind shadows and bloody guys with big hands and jagged faces! Great stuff from Frank "Make Mine Marvel!" Miller. **$2.95 MR**

STARCHILD: METROPOLIS—PROLOGUE

COPPERVALE PRESS Yes! A new *Starchild* mini-series! (Or should we say maxi-series? This puppy's 14 issues long!!) This ish, there's this storyteller (like you weren't expectin' that) at the gates of Brigadoon, who tells his version of the creation myth. His audience? Why, just your typical smiths, craftsmen and children. Oh yeah, Anders Higgins, the Starchild himself, is there too. By James Owen. **$2.95**

INCREDIBLE HULK #444



KINGDOM COME #2

PREACHER #16

SUPERBOY #30

STARMAN #21

DC COMICS "Sand and Stars," Part 2 (of 4). "Information. Information. We want information." Well, actually, we don't want any info (except maybe just who the friggin' X-traitor is!), but Starman sure does. His quest for info turns sour when he's attacked by a superpowered goon. But that Starman, he's no dope, so he teams up with the Golden Age Sandman. By James Robinson, Tony Harris and Wade von Grawbadger. **$2.25**

STRANGERS IN PARADISE #13

ABSTRACT STUDIO When the whole gang hits Hawaii, it's just like "The Brady Bunch." Remember? Greg finds that cursed idol and majorly wipes out surfing, Peter's almost killed by a bloodsuckin' tarantula and Cindy gets busted while working the streets? This ish, though, Dora's there to stop Katchoo from keeping Francine from stopping Freddie from marrying Casey. Got it? Good. The chaos erupts this issue! By Terry Moore. Moore says, "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad *Strangers in Paradise* World as they all converge and collide in Hawaii. At this point, I'm rewriting the issue as I go and all I know is that everybody's gonna end up in Hawaii and that everybody's after everybody. I'm not making any promises about how it turns out or who ends up with who. There will be some sort of minor resolution between everybody and I'm leaving the door totally open for the future, because when I start the Homage [Comics] line, I'm going to do a prequel. The Homage books are going to start before this series and we'll work our way back up to where we were." **$2.75**

SUPERBOY #30

DC COMICS "Losin' It," Part 6 (of 6). This is the big one! Li'l Supes finally learns the truth 'bout Knockout (They're falsies?). Now he's gotta sacrifice alla his beliefs and do his best RoboCop impression: "Dead or alive, you're coming with me!" By Karl Kesel, Tom Grummett and Doug Hazlewood. Kesel says, "Tom and I are sad to leave the book, but we're hoping to leave on a high point. We think the 'Losin' It' story put Superboy through some paces, and hopefully he learned a little bit about loyalty and the true meaning of love more than anything else. It's been fun. Of course, I won't be very far away from the Kid, since I am co-writing the new *Superboy and the Ravers* book." **$1.95**

MORE PICKS

THE UNCANNY X-MEN #335

MARVEL Earth's Mightiest Heroes join forces with Earth's Most Hated (yet most-merchandised) Heroes. It's the Avengers and the X-Men together again! It seems the plans are finally put into motion to take down that giant Magneto lookalike, Onslaught. This is the set-up for the big battle over in *Onslaught: X-Men* #1! By Scott Lobdell, Joe Madureira and Tim Townsend. **$1.95**

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #12

MARVEL Flat-out the best comic currently produced by Marvel, the staggeringly underrated *Untold Tales of Spider-Man* continues to prove that an affordably priced, well written, well drawn comic will not only sell, it's what this industry needs. This ish: Betty Brant reveals her secrets, including her relationship with one Peter Parker and...Spider-Man! But while you're busy learnin' Betty's secrets, Spidey's got woman problems of a different sort, namely a superheroine who insists on being Web-Head's partner. By Kurt Busiek, Pat Olliffe and Al Vey. Busiek says, "The thing that most appealed to me about doing this issue was that it's a chance to delve into the life of a long-running Spider-Man character, Betty Brant, and see stuff that we've never seen before. This is not an 'everything you know is wrong' type of story, it's an 'everything you know is only the surface' [one]. We have never known anything about Betty's family life. Not a word. So the chance to sort of introduce a character who's been around in comics for longer than I've been reading them, that's a lot of fun." **99 CENTS**

X-MEN #55

MARVEL Onslaught, Onslaught, Onslaught. Doesn't anybody in comics understand that fans hate big crossovers and that while they sell short-term, it pushes a lot of readers out of this hobby altogether in the long run? No? All right, whatever. This exciting chapter: The X-Men and alla their allies suffer their biggest loss. So now they've gotta bite the bullet and accept help from the nastiest villain of 'em all! (No, we ain't tellin' who it is. Why? Two reasons: 1) It'd ruin the surprise. 2) We couldn't get Marvel to tell us, even when we promised to stop making fun of the Spider-Clone. Go figure.) By Mark Waid and Andy Kubert. **$1.95** W

UNCANNY X-MEN #335

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #12

AT A GLANCE!

A listing of the high-profile books shipping in June

Action Comics #724 (DC) When the Luthor-controlled Brawl is shut down while fighting Superman, everyone blames Supes for its death. **$1.95**

Adventures of Superman #537 (DC) Someone's released all the freak mutations from S.T.A.R. onto Metropolis' streets. So guess who's stuck street cleaning? **$1.95**

Amazing Spider-Man #414 (Marvel) As Peter Parker's lying close to death, Spidey fights a new female assassin called Delilah. **$1.50**

Atomik Angels #2 (Crusade) The Angels must work as a team for the first time to save Manhattan from a poisonous gas and an even bigger threat from Lennox. **$2.50**

Cable #34 (Marvel) It's round one of Cable vs. Onslaught's new punk, the Hulk! The fight continues over in *Hulk* #444. **$1.95**

Crow: Flesh and Blood #2 (Kitchen Sink) The Crowly-resurrected Iris Shaw enacts her revenge on those who murdered her and her child. **$2.95**

Further Adventures of Cyclops & Phoenix #3 (Marvel) The time-travelin' Cyke and Phoenix struggle to fight Apocalypse's ascension. **$1.95**

Lady Death: The Odyssey #4 (Chaos!) Lady Death's ultimate role in the Judgment Era is revealed when she battles Hell's executioner Asteroth. **$2.95**

Onslaught: X-Men #1 (Marvel) The X-Men finally take on Onslaught himself! Learn the who, what, where, why and how right here! **$3.95**

Sensational Spider-Man #7 (Marvel) Could Peter Parker be suffering from the fatal clone degeneration? Just pray that the docs at the E.R. can help him. **$1.95**

Shi #10 (Crusade) Arashi goes schizo as Shi continues to rip apart his organization, even though he could've sworn she was dead. **$2.95**

Spawn #51 (Image) Spawn battles tons of demons and Violators in the third level of Hell. **$1.95**

Spectacular Spider-Man #237 (Marvel) While Pete's just about to greet death, Dr. Connors turns into the Lizard, Jameson disappears and Spidey's gotta take on a herd o' villains! **$1.50**

Spider-Man #71 (Marvel) That bad-ass Hammerhead goes hunting through the hospital for a deathly ill Peter Parker. **$1.95**

Superman #114 (DC) With full control of Superman's body, Brainiac uses it for mass destruction, while Supes' mind is stuck in some helpless teen's body. **$1.95**

Superman: The Man of Steel #59 (DC) Lois and Professor Hamilton try to catch the goomba behind the S.T.A.R. monster breakout, but Supes accidentally blows their scheme. **$1.95**

Wolverine #104 (Marvel) Wolvie, Chamber and the Vision get rough with Gateway to find out how he fits in with Onslaught. **$1.95**

The X-Files #19 (Topps) The evil-clone Scully arc concludes, as our favorite agents head to Loch Ness to meet some cultists who believe in overlapping dimensions. **$2.95**

The X-Files Comics Digest #3 (Topps) After giving birth to a healthy baby, a Virginian woman discovers that the infant's become quite withered. Is it just sick or did the wee folk replace it with one of theirs? **$3.95**

X-Force #57 (Marvel) That wacky X-Man shows up to help against Onslaught. But that nasty Mr. Sinister makes an appearance too. **$1.95**

X-Man #18 (Marvel) As Nathan meets up with X-Force, Mr. Sinister finally makes his move. **$1.95**

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THE TOY CHEST

STAR WARS IS COMING IN FULL FORCE

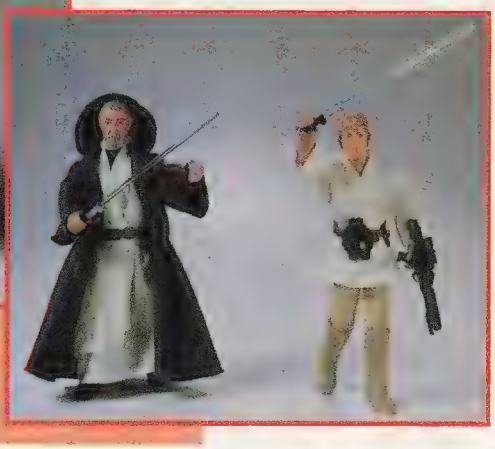
Kenner spokesperson Linda Baker reports that the company's marketing and development department is busy at work preparing new additions to its Star Wars lines Power of the Force and Shadows of the Empire. While Kenner will not confirm future releases, it's a good bet that collectors will be seeing the following figures produced through 1996 and into 1997: Attack C-3PO, Attack R2-D2, Darth Vader (Removable Helmet), Death Star Gunner, Greedo, Koor, Han Solo (Carbonite), Han Solo (Stormtrooper), Luke Skywalker (Coruscant), Luke Skywalker (Jedi Outfit), Luke Skywalker (Stormtrooper), Princess Leia (Boussh Disguise), Snoova, Tatooine Stormtrooper and Tusken Raider. Watch for more specific info in upcoming columns.

Kenner has announced plans to release a line of eight 12-inch Star Wars figures. Four Figures—Ben Obi-Wan Kenobi, Darth Vader, Han Solo and Luke Skywalker—will be released in July. The remaining four figures (Chewbacca and three other characters yet to be determined) will be available later in the year. The figures in this line will look completely different from the 12-inch figures first issued in 1979. Also look for C-3PO and Darth Vader carrying cases, once hot items with kids in the early 1980s. The C-3PO case will be similar to the original, but will come equipped with lights and sounds.

SPAWN SPRING LINE SELLING WELL

Word from retailers across the country indicates that McFarlane Toys' spring 1996 line of Spawn action figures is selling well. Released in early February, interest has been especially high for Cy-Gor (one per case, $25-$30 in secondary market), Exo-Skeleton Spawn (two per case, $18-$20 in secondary market) and the Maxx (two per case, $20-$25 in secondary market). The Maxx will be replaced by the Cybernetic Violator which was originally scheduled to ship with the fall '95 Spawn variants. Sam Kieth, creator of the Maxx, has chosen not to renew his contract with McFarlane and is looking for greener pastures.

Repaints of the spring '96 line will be out in May and they include a Clown 2 with a day-glow face, Exo-Skeleton Spawn and She-Spawn with different colored bones, and Cy-Gor in gold armor as opposed to silver. All figures will be packaged two per case.



Above: Everyone's favorite 12-inch Wookie will be available later in the year, while a 12-inch (L. to r.) Ben Kenobi and Luke Skywalker will be out in July

NEW McFARLANE RELEASES

This summer will see the release of Series 5 and 6 of the Spawn line. The first new slew of figures, shipping in July, includes Nuclear Spawn, Overt-kill 2, Tremor 2, Vandalizer, Viking Spawn and Wildstorm. Each figure comes with a ton of cool accessories.

Series 6, slated for an August release, will contain Alien Spawn, Battleclad Spawn, the Freak, Sansker, SuperPatriot and Tiffany. Sansker comes with a flexible wrap-around rubber tail. Tiffany's winged backpack turns into a sled, with her sword becoming the steering mechanism. The Freak comes with his bag of mayhem and destruction, while Alien Spawn's main defense is a shoulder catapult. SuperPatriot has removable arms that can be replaced with very large guns. And Battleclad Spawn is touted as being the Spawn line's most poseable figure to date.

Expect to see four individually boxed double-sized figures hit the scene in '96. Spawn and Angela, due in late June, will be approximately 13-inches tall. If they sell well, plans are to issue Medieval Spawn (13-inches) and a Violator (24-inches) right before Christmas. The super-sized figures will retail for $19.95.

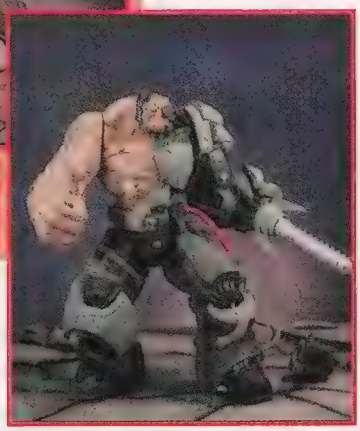
McFarlane is tentatively planning to reissue three action vehicles in 1996 with new decorations. Included in that group are the Spawn Air Cycle, Spawn Battle Horse and Violator Chopper.

The second series of WetWorks figures, with a completely new package design, will arrive on toy shelves sometime in May. Series 2 includes three female characters: Blood Queen (sword, staff and fabric cape), Grail 2 (crossbow and staff) and Pilgrim (lots of guns and knives). The remaining figures are Dane 2 (missile launchers), Dozer 2 (world's largest hand-held gun) and Frankenstein (bone staff and removable mask). Early reports indicate that Dozer 2 will be packaged one per case.

SPAWN EXCLUSIVES

Comic retailers ordering Spawn #50 through Diamond Distribution will be able to take advantage of a special promotion. For every 50 copies that a retailer buys, he'll receive an exclusive

BY **DAN ALBAUGH**



Nuclear Spawn (above) and Overt-kill 2 (right) are due out in July

Spawn action figure featuring the character's brand-new head. According to creator Todd McFarlane, "It's my way of thanking the direct market retailers for supporting Spawn every month since issue #1. I also wanted to add extra punching power to the unveiling of Spawn's new face, and drive home the point of issue #50's storyline."

What will Spawn's new face look like? It's been a heavily guarded secret, and collectors and retailers will have to wait until the book and figure arrive sometime in May. It's estimated that between 5,000-6,000 of the exclusive Spawn figures will be produced.

Last year, McFarlane Toys issued a gold repainted Spawn as a Kay-Bee exclusive. Beginning this summer, McFarlane will issue Medieval Spawn, Overt-kill, Tremor and Clown as gold repaint exclusives for Kay-Bee. Starting with the Medieval Spawn, expect a new figure to be released about every other month.

McFARLANE'S NEW TOTAL CHAOS LINE

Hot from the mind of Todd McFarlane comes a new line of action figures called Total Chaos. Pegged for a September release, these never-before-seen characters include Al Simmons, Dragon Blade, Gore, Hoof, Thorax and Widow Maker. Some, none or all may eventually be introduced in the pages of *Spawn*.

The Al Simmons figure is intended to be from an alternate universe and has a face mask that can be lifted to see what the non-Spawn Simmons looks like. Dragon Blade comes with an actual dragon's head impaled on his spear. Gore is a cybernetic pirate hunchback equipped with tons o' weapons. Thorax is an insect monster furnished with a missile launcher, while Widow Maker is a multi-limbed babe who's also got an inclination for projectile launchers. And Hoof is just yer typical weapon-bearing rhinoceros.

NEWS OF NOTE

Most retailers in the secondary market reported disappointing sales on McFarlane Toys' Youngblood line, placing the blame on McFarlane for releasing the Youngblood, WetWorks and Spawn Series 3 lines all at once. The one-year relationship between McFarlane and Liefeld has ended by mutual consent, while Liefeld has reached a deal with Trendmasters. More details to come.

McFarlane is in the process of organizing a toy club. For a $10 membership fee, collectors will receive an exclusive action figure, discounts on old and new releases, plus a quarterly newsletter. For more info, write McFarlane Toys at 11918 Farmington Rd., Livonia, MI 48150.

Reports of sales in excess of $250 for the Picard (Tapestry) figure from Playmates' Star Trek: The Next Generation line have been received. Hobby experts estimate that the figure is being packaged at a one per 20 case ratio. Speaking of Playmates, the company has acquired the rights to the teenage sci-fi TV show "Hypernauts," and will release a line of action figures and accessories before Christmas

BONUS PHOTOS!

Here's an early look at Trendmasters' Youngblood and Prophet lines—Prophet (left) and Shaft

Though he'll deny it to his dying day, Dan Albaugh once kissed a Barbie doll.

WISH LIST

THE 10 ACTION FIGURES THAT WIZARD WANTS TO SEE MADE (AND SOON)

1) Captain America (Marvel Heroes)
Third month as the #1 pick! Two things about this figure: a shield-slingin' arm that actually works and the suit is the classic one, not that swings-replacing the A" redesign that Liefeld's working on. (Ugh.)

2) Morpheus (DC Heroes)
Wait a minute, isn't this guy dead? Anyway, DC's Sandman would look so cool with his removable helmet, translucent ruby and snap-on pouch of sand.

3) Princess Leia in Slave Outfit (Star Wars)
Dressed provocatively in the slave outfit from "Jedi," Leia completes the "very degrading to women" look with a removable choker chain.

4) Death (DC Heroes)
Two Vertigo heroes in the top 10? Hmmm... anyway, Death would come with a removable ankh and removable funky top hat.

5) Bizarro (DC Heroes)
Tatteredly dressed in removable Clark Kent-ish glasses, jacket and tie. (Note: authentic "Me score low in S.A.T.s" smart.)

6) Bane (Batman)
Not like the crappy one from the Batman TAS line, but a Bart Sears-designed monstrosity, complete with removable venom wires.

7) Man-Wolf (Spider-Man)
Yessss! Comes ready to kick Spider butt in realllly tattered Astronaut suit, glow-in-the-dark moon rock, and neon-red moon gem on his throat (which doubles as the button you push to make him howl-just like Trendmasters' lil' Godzilla figures!).

8) Sunturion (Iron Man)
What is this, attack of the vague villain month? Anyhoo, Sunny would come all nice and shiny like Toy Biz's Iron Man figures with snap-on "solar beams."

9) Jackal (Spider-Man)
Really tall and thin like they used to draw him, with small DNA vials and cloning equipment.

10) M-113 Salt Vampire (Classic Star Trek)
A "Whoop! Goldberg figure? No wait, our mistake. This ugly shapeshifting critter would come equipped with interchangeable Kirk, Spock and McCoy heads.

scene

A guide to Japanese comics and animation

by Carl Gustav Horn

the legacy of macross

At Anime Expo '94, Americans saw "Macross Plus" five months before the Japanese did

It's a pretty safe bet that no single anime title has had such a vital and continuing experience among American anime fans as "Macross."

Campy '60s childhood classics such as "Speed Racer" or "Gigantor" never sparked the same fire in their remakes, and the well respected '70s youth drama "Space Battleship Yamato" ("Star Blazers" in the U.S.) remains only a relic of the past. Its Japanese sequel, 1995's "Yamato 2520," bore no resemblance to the original and remains unreleased here. Only when we reach the 1980s do we find an anime title that not only found acclaim and influence when it first came to America, but whose distant '90s sequel managed to garner the highest praise both here and in Japan. The title in question is "Macross."

The full name was "Superdimensional Fortress Macross" when the story began in 1982 as a 36-episode weekly series on Japanese television. The title referred to the focus of the show, a transforming space battleship so enormous that it had aircraft carriers for arms. Apparently, the uncrewed alien dreadnought crashed on Earth in 1999. For 10 years, humanity studied its advanced technology, learning to make transforming mecha—such as the famous F-14-based Valkyrie—that could switch to an upright, humanoid "battloid mode" or crouching "gerwalk mode" from its normal airplane configuration. When the aliens came for their space fortress in 2009, all-out war erupted.

While giant robots vs. aliens was hardly a new idea, "Macross" was fresh and contemporary. The show caught the spirit of the times with both the newly revived Cold War and the "idol singer" (cute, young, media-manufactured pop star) fad in Japan. The alien invaders were obedient clones whose militaristic society was subverted by exposure to Earth's TV, records and consumer products! And even though Episode 27—which contained a half-hour Judgment Day from orbit—was meant to be the end of the series, public demand was so popular that nine more episodes were created.

"Macross" officially came to the United States with the on-video premiere of "Macross: Booby Trap," an English dub of the first three episodes, at the 1984 World Science Fiction Convention in Los Angeles. Working for Harmony Gold, Carl Macek, an anime fan with experience in the film industry, had the idea of putting "Macross" on TV in America as it had been in Japan. However, the mentality at the time was that a weekly animated show couldn't hold an audience's attention. And since 36 episodes weren't enough for a daily schedule, Macek hit on the idea of combining Macross with two other unrelated (except for their transforming mecha) anime shows, and rewriting them together as a multi-generational epic, 1985's TV show "Robotech." Despite this, "Macross," being the first show in the new story, came through fairly unchanged, and its impressive look and handling of such elements as death, alcoholism and interracial love gained considerable attention.

You can see both the American and the Japanese interpretations of "Macross" with Streamline's "Robotech Perfect Collection: Macross." Each $19.95 tape in the 18-volume set contains two episodes of "Robotech" and those same two episodes in their original Japanese form with English subtitles.

The first serious attempt at a "sequel" was on the tenth anniversary of the original show, with the 1992 direct-to-video "Macross II." However, this story took place eighty years in the future, involved none of the original characters, and didn't have many of the original's top talents. It was eventually announced that this was not part of the "official" story, but an alternate-universe version of "Macross." Nevertheless, it was "Macross," and a sign of its magic here was that U.S. Renditions released it in America immediately following its Japanese release—a move unprecedented at the time. "Macross II" was one of the many titles acquired from USR by Manga Entertainment and was rereleased by Manga in 1995 in one 120-minute tape entitled "Macross II: The Movie," available for $19.95.

The real sequel, "Macross Plus," came to video in 1994. With the highest budget ever

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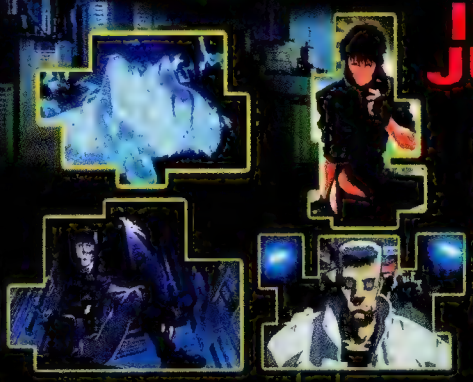

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for an OAV series, "Macross Plus" looked real sharp and fans could see that director Shoji Kawamori had real reasons for making "Plus," beyond the mere bankability of a sequel. "With the world changing as it has over the past decade, I began to feel that I could create a new 'Macross,' one that would suit this time period," says Kawamori. In "Macross Plus," the war was strictly within, as its "idol singer" Sharon Apple is a computer program given life by a woman who gave up her own dreams of singing long ago. Meanwhile, the two men in that woman's life are test pilots fighting over her and the prototype Valkyries they fly, which were built by rival defense contractors.

U.S. fans actually got to see "Macross Plus" five months before the Japanese did, through a special screening at Anime Expo '94 that was the talk of the entire convention. The four parts of "Macross Plus" are now all available on VHS (a bilingual, "international edition" laserdisc is also available as a Japanese import from Bandai Visual) from Manga in either subtitled ($24.95) or dubbed ($14.95) format for each 45-min. episode. Furthermore, the four parts have recently been edited together with new animation (including a different ending) to make a movie, but it's currently only available as an import directly from Japan, as is "Macross Seven," a television sequel to the original 1982 show. Kawamori made Max—a supporting character in the original "Macross"—the lead in "Macross Seven," based on his perceived popularity among American fans.

The "Macross" saga has truly reached the point where its American fans and America itself are changing the face of what is still a creative force. And in an industry where pointless sequels often trade on a classic name and nothing else, "Macross" is still transforming. W

Much to his dismay, Carl Gustav Horn has never been dubbed or subtitled.

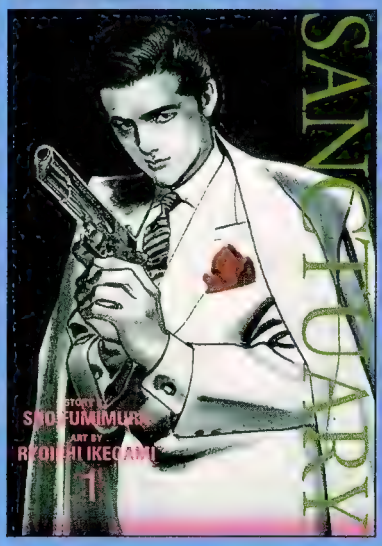
"Macross II" wasn't part of the "official" Macross story

picks of the month

manga

Sanctuary

(Viz Comics, $3.50, monthly, b&w, back issues also available as Viz Graphic Novel collections, mature readers)



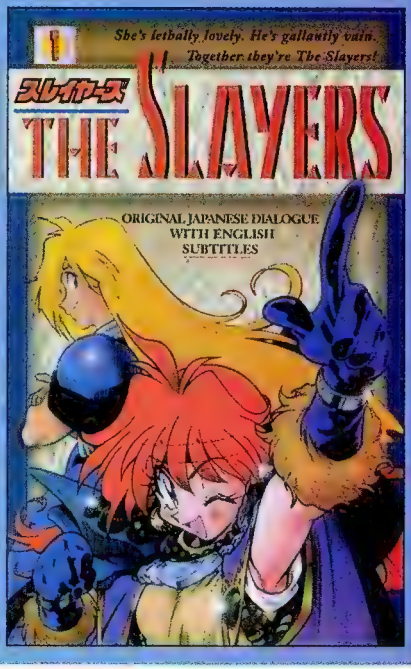
Of the comics drawn by Ryoichi Ikegami—artist of the Japanese version of *Spider-Man* as well as *Mai the Psychic Girl*, *Crying Freeman* and *Samurai Crusader*—*Sanctuary* is the best, and that's due to the hard-boiled, political/crime story by writer Sho Fumimura. In their boyhood days, Hojo and Asami survived the mid-'70s Pol Pot genocide in Cambodia and returned to their native Japan with the deep conviction that their peaceful and prosperous homeland may one day be thrown into chaos as well. The duo try to prevent this by plotting a two-track takeover of Japan—Hojo, through organized crime, and Asami, through the government. As the line between crooks and congressmen gets blurred, *Sanctuary* has some uncanny parallels to recent Japanese scandals. Fumimura writes like a bullet train and Ikegami smokes like a mobster's pistol in this juicy thriller.

anime

The Slayers

(Software Sculptors, subtitled, 100 minutes, $24.95, volume 1 of 3)

Megumi Hayashibara is Japan's most in-demand anime voice actress, playing all sorts of characters like the nihilistic Rei Ayanami on the current Japanese television hit "Neon Genesis Evangelion." This subtitled version of TV Tokyo's fantasy/comedy "The Slayers" allows Americans to experience Hayashibara in her element, as magic-user/thief Lina Inverse. The character, like her voice actress, sometimes wishes she were more like your tall-and-busty superheroine, but is happy to settle for being short, cute and smart. Regardless, she's certainly smarter than her Groo-with-looks traveling companion, Gourry, who's as loyal as man's best friend, though not quite as bright. Lina's speeches on fighting evil can barely be heard over the sound of her shoveling loot into her bag as she robs from the bad and gives to herself. "The Slayers" packs some magical fireworks in with the humor for a thoroughly entertaining package. ●



JULY 1996 -- Anime Squares Off

Kagato Destroys 1 Item at his location every move. He will continue until stopped.

He has been called "The Destroyer of Artifacts."

ANI-MAYHEM™ is a CCG like nothing you've ever seen.
With ACTUAL SCREEN ART from the scrappiest Anime around.
"TENCHI MUYO!", "RANMA 1/2", "BUBBLE GUM CRISIS" & "EL HAZARD".
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PIONEER
The Art of Entertainment

DRAWING BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for **Wizard Readers' Art**

The ol' "Board" is Amalgam Central this month, as we spotlight some choice runners-up from issue #54's Marvel vs. DC "create your own Amalgam character" contest!

The four folks whose artwork got an honorable mention this month will each receive a *Guy Gardner: Warrior* #29 signed by Beau Smith and a *The Maxx* #1 signed by Sam Kieth. Each of the three runners-up scores a *Batman* #0 signed by Doug Moench, a *Amazing Fantasy* #16 signed by Kurt Busiek and a *Justice League America* #107 signed by Chuck Wojtkiewicz. The Grand Prize dude scores all those goodies plus a piece of original Dr. Octopus art by Marc Sasso, straight from the Fleer *Spider-Man Premium '96* card set, and generously donated by Fleer—thanks, folks! Congrats, everyone—and thanks for a truly fun "Board"! (Look in a future edition of Bullpen for a shot of the art by the regular contest's Grand Prize winner!)

HEY! Fleer/SkyBox International presents *Spider-Man Premium '96*, a 100-card set showcasing Spider-Man's worst enemies and villains. The set features all-painted artwork from the industry's top names. The Brothers Hildebrandt, Dave DeVries, Mark Texeira and Ray Lago all appear, as does the painter of this month's Grand Prize piece, Marc Sasso!

And for the next five months, all painted entries sent to "Drawing Board" will be eligible for Fleer/SkyBox's talent search. The best painter will be commissioned to do a drawing for a 1997 Fleer/SkyBox International Marvel or DC card set!

THE ARTIST

WILLIAM H. TSCHARNER JR.

THE BOOTY

GRAND PRIZE

SUPERNETO William H. Tscharner Jr. St. Louis, MO

RUNNERS-UP

THE SILVER FLASHER **Justin Smith** Bayonne, NJ

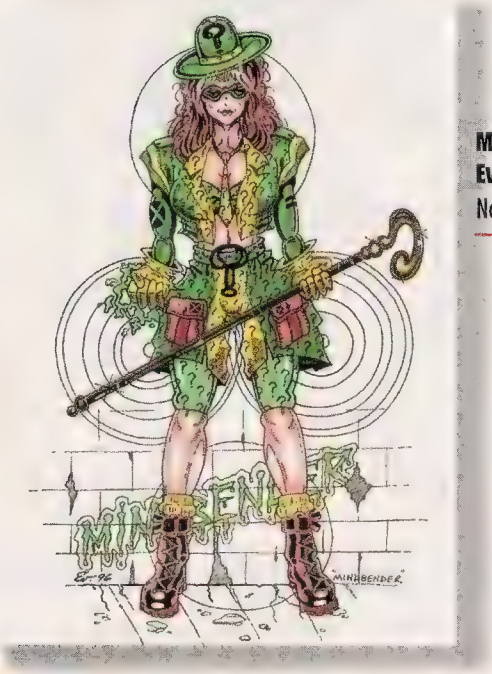
PLASTIQUE AND DESTINY DINKS **Tony Zallocco** Studio City, CA

WONDERINE **Scott Derby** Philadelphia, PA
*(One of **many** "Wonderines" we received!)*

JUSTICE AVENGERS
(Top row: Stormbringer, Scarlet Fate, Iron Lantern, Blue Spider, American Hawk; bottom row: Devil Bat, Gammazon, Flashfire)
Rudy C. Gustilo
Long Beach, CA

DR. SIVANAPUS VS. MARY JANE MARVEL
Keith McCaffety
Houston, TX

AMERICAN JOKE
Michael C. Jackson
Chaffee, MO



MINDBENDER
Everett Kruger
Norwalk, IA

Want your art to appear on one of these three pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your Drawing Board entries to:

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Entries can be e-mailed to WizardTGTC@aol.com (Please use an EPS or TIFF format @ 300 dpi.). And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. If you do not write your full name, address and telephone number on the back of your entry, it will be disqualified. All entries are nonreturnable and become the property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? Good luck!

BY JOYCE M. STEEL

Holomania Hits Home

Is it a bird, or a plane or Superman or...some sort of small kitchen appliance? Remember the days when most hologram cards left you wondering? Well, no more, thanks to the release of the first-ever all-3-D hologram set, *Superman Holo*, due out in June from Fleer/SkyBox. Each of the 50 cards in the series was painstakingly designed, blueprinted and sculpted into a 3-D model. Then—and only then—was it fit to be transferred to a hologram card. The result? Nothing even remotely similar to a toaster here.

Chase cards include four HoloAction cards (1:3 packs) featuring Supes' most famous foes, and one clear HoloCel (1:36 packs). The series' primary drawback is the price tag: $2.49 for a five-card pack. But with just 50 cards in the basic set, collecting the whole darn thing shouldn't require more than, say, a second mortgage or the sale of a sibling. Just kiddin'.

And for Marvel fans, Fleer/SkyBox offers up *Spider-Man Premium 1996*, dedicated to the coolest and cruelest of Web-Head's enemies. The 100-card painted basic set, due out in June, features sinister subsets like "Black Widows" (damsels of destruction), "R.I.P." (paying tribute to fallen foes) and "Eternal Enemies" (showcasing the likes of Green Goblin, Dr. Octopus, Venom and Carnage). Artists include the Hildebrandts, Texeira, DeVries, Larkin and others; six Canvas cards (1:6 packs) and four HoloMotion cards (1:36 packs) chase the series (eight cards per pack, suggested retail $1.99).

KID STUFF

Topps is gonna give you kids Goosebumps in May! R.L. Stine's best-selling series of freaky, fun kids' books comes to cards for the first time in this 54-card series of newly commissioned art from each of the 12 books and stills from the TV series. Fun subsets and chase collectibles include nine puzzle cards (part of the regular series), six glow-in-the-dark chase cards, six thermographic (heat sensitive) chase cards and six mirror-foil monster stickers (eight cards per pack, suggested retail $1.00). And if ya didn't get enough last time around, Fleer/SkyBox is bringing the Gargoyles back in June with an interactive series recapping the stone warriors' second season (10 cards per pack, suggested retail 99 cents).

WILDSTORM

The Art of Joe Chiodo, a 90-carder featuring 72 new paintings and an 18-card retrospective, is set for a June release. For the new paintings in the series, Chiodo—a fan-favorite when it comes to "good girl" painters—turned to the women of WildStorm for his inspiration. Nine swimsuit cards printed on special watercolor paper chase the series (eight cards per pack, no established suggested retail).

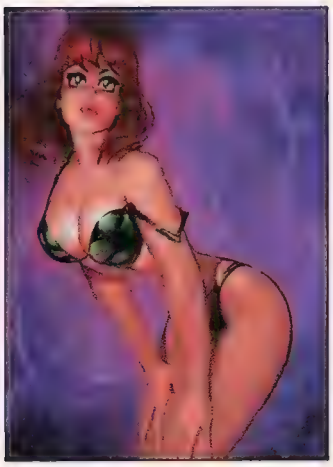
WORTH YER WHILE

In June, Comic Images presents *Shi: Visions of the Golden Empire*, a 90-card Gold-Chromium set featuring Billy Tucci's latest work on the ever-popular Shi, along with art from *Tomoe* and *Senryaku*. Nine new Tucci paintings and 500 randomly inserted Tucci autographed cards highlight the set (seven cards per pack, suggested retail $2.49).

The second half of Joe Jusko's impressive Edgar Rice Burroughs portfolio, along with the second half of an exclusive Jusko interview, accent FPG's *Joe Jusko Colossal Cards II* coming in June. The 50-card set is printed on 24pt. stock and an autographed card is included in every pack (five cards per pack, no established suggested retail).

A Trekkie reminder: the *Season Five* set of the seven-set *Star Trek: The Next Generation Collection* from Fleer/SkyBox debuts in June (eight cards per pack, suggested retail $1.49). W

Joyce M. Steel hates buying beer at the local Gas 'n' Sip, 'cause she's always carded.



"Huh? 'The turkey's done'? I don't get it." WildStorm's *Art of Joe Chiodo*.

"What? The price of bacon came down? Guess I won't be needin' this anymore..." *Shi: VotGE* from Comic Images.

InQuest presents HIT THE DECK

the latest in collectible card game news

• The most anticipated sets of early summer have to be *Magic's* ***Alliances***, the sequel to last year's smash-hit stand-alone *Ice Age*, and ***Middle-earth: The Dragons***, the first expansion to the critically acclaimed game that adapts Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings." Ironically, *Ice Age* should be out of print coinciding with the release of *Alliances*, an expansion which continues the *Ice Age* storyline as the world thaws and new enemies emerge. For *Middle-earth, The Dragons* brings more flying reptiles, more lore cards to augment the sages' spell-casting, and expanded movement rules for sea voyaging.

• Hold your breath no longer—***X-Files*** is finally on its way in July! NXT Games is working closely with show creator Chris Carter and using shots from the first two seasons to capture the flavor of the series. Each player puts together a team of FBI agents sent to investigate sites which give you clues to unmasking your opponent's conspiracy and uncovering the secrets that'll win you the game.

• ***Arcadia: The Wyld Hunt***, based on White Wolf's hit RPG *Changeling: The Dreaming*, looks to be something new and innovative. The game takes on a very roleplaying, "storyteller" feel as characters journey through the faerie world of Arcadia completing tasks, gaining items and experience points which can be spent on improving skills or buying new ones, all the while attempting to hinder their opponents any way they can. It's due this July. ■ *Michael Searle*

Michael Searle is the editor of Wizard's sister mag InQuest, the all-around grooviest guide to collectible card games.

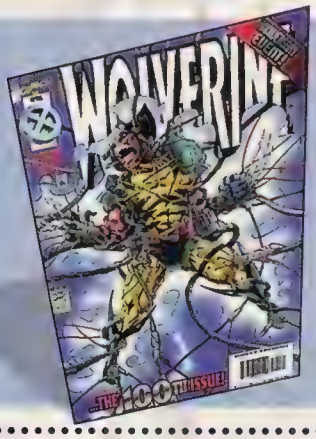
***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. Here are May's hottest back issues.**

TOP 10 COMICS

1. PREACHER #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis ARTIST: Steve Dillon

The king is dead…long live the king! Now that *Sandman* has wrapped up its award-winning run, the new king of the Vertigo hill is *Preacher*, the ultra-violent saga of Preacher Jesse Custer, his kinda girlfriend Tulip and Cassidy, your typical Irish, fun-lovin', drinking vampire. Jesse's got the Genesis power, which means, what he *says*, you *do*! And now he's on a quest to find God (who left his heavenly post) and tell 'im to get back to work! Unbelievably cool stuff by the team of writer Garth Ennis and artist Steve Dillon. Amalgam (See? Comics can teach you new words!) the fact that this book is actually a great read with its fairly itty print-run and it's no surprise how it got pole position. (Hmm…seeing as how there are less *Preacher* #2s than issue #1s, wonder how long it'll be before issue #2 rises to the top of the charts…)



2. WOLVERINE #100

WRITER: Larry Hama ARTISTS: Adam Kubert and Dan Green

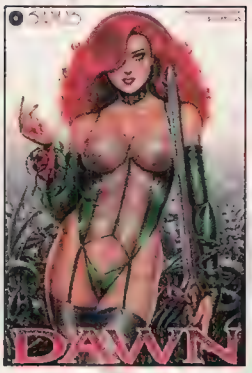
After nearly a decade of slowly removing the animalistic fury that made Wolverine such a cool character, the powers at Marvel finally gave 'em back in a big way. (Hey, Marvel, here's a hint: When you have a cool adamantium berserker, don't tame him! When you've got a cool spidery jokester, don't clone him!)

Anyway, after enduring hideous torture in this gala 100th ish, Wolverine reverts to a bestial state, escapes his captivity and hunts down his tormentors, reminding us that what Wolvie's best at isn't very nice.

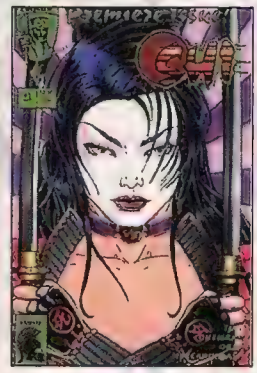
3. DAWN #1

WRITER: Joseph Michael Linsner
ARTIST: Joseph Michael Linsner

Y'know, it's almost impossible to write any more stuff on these Bad Girl books. We've made all the silicone, gravity and back-problem jokes. We've told you what the stories are about. We've talked about the art. The creators. Low print-runs. Everything. Hell, even listing all the things we normally talk about only fills a little more than half the write-up. We're stuck. Doomed. We can't even make up funny nonsense stuff, 'cause we're so bummed about Waid & Garney leaving *Captain America*. Sigh. Maybe the next book'll revitalize us…



NUMBER THREE



NUMBER FOUR

4. SHI #1

WRITERS: William Tucci and Peter Gutierrez
ARTISTS: William Tucci and Barry Orkin

"They'll put out this garbage with this girl with big boobs, a fishnet bodysuit, heels and guns, with really poorly drawn and horribly written stories…just crap." All right. That exciting quote comes from Shi creator Billy Tucci himself, courtesy of his *Wizard* #56 interview. Nope, Bill's not too keen on the whole "Bad Girl" thing. But what qualifies as a "Bad Girl"? Is Shi a Bad Girl? Is Wonder Woman? Lady Death? Vampirella? Well, seeing as how the whole Bad Girl phenomenon is losing steam pretty quickly, we guess we'll see who the Bad Girls *were*.

NUMBER FIVE

5. THE X-FILES #1

WRITER: Stefan Petrucha
ARTIST: Charles Adlard

Is Scully a Bad Girl? Let's see: Bad Girls don't accomplish anything/Scully never accomplishes anything. Bad Girls beat the hell out of people/Scully shot Mulder once. Yeah, we'd say she's a Bad Girl. Toss in the fact that she's got a cult-hit TV show, an under-printed first issue comic and it's a wonder we don't have a dozen Scully spin-offs. (Hey, a Scully/Razor team-up would be the coolest thing since Kirby's Galactus, right?). If she'd just ditch that Peter-Weller-school-of-acting dropout, David Duchovny, she'd be our flavor of the month.

6. DC VERSUS MARVEL #1

WRITER: Ron Marz
ARTISTS: D. Jurgens, J. Rubinstein, C. Castellini & P. Neary

This book was wrong. It was cool Marvel and DC teaming up like this, but Lobo kicks Wolverine's ass? Batman K.O.'s Cap? Somebody fell asleep at the wheel. Wolverine's a much better *character* than Lobo, but Lobo went toe-to-toe with Superman while heavily intoxicated and held his own. He woulda smeared Wolvie in under a minute. Now Batman can beat anybody when he puts his mind to it. Superman. Flash. Hulk. Everybody takes a backseat to Bats…except Cap. Maybe Cap can't score like Batman, but he kicks tail like nobody's business.

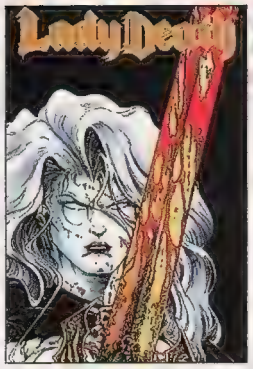
NUMBER SIX

NUMBER SEVEN

7. HITMAN #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis
ARTIST: John McCrea

Another new entry into the mighty Top 10, *Hitman* #1 drives home a point that should be known to most o' you comic fans: Garth Ennis is hot. Really, really hot. In addition to Mr. Ennis' skilled pen-to-paper ability, this ish stars Tommy Monaghan (a.k.a. Hitman), superpowered assassin. He's got x-ray vision, can read minds and is a real mean shot. And what he does is kill metahumans. His latest target? The Joker, current resident of Arkham Asylum.



NUMBER EIGHT

8. LADY DEATH #1

WRITER: Brian Pulido
ARTIST: Steven Hughes

Geez, the next three books are Bad Girl books. Doesn't anybody buy comics with guys in skintight costumes anymore? Wait…that sounded all wrong. We didn't mean to insinuate that we like guys in tight pants or that we like snapping midgets with towels at public bathhouses, we just….uh…say, catch the hockey game last night? Tough game. Plenty of fights. We were loud, drank beer and made sure no one around us enjoyed the game. And we scratched ourselves. Oh man, we're sinking fast. Quick, on to the next book!

9. LADY DEATH: THE ODYSSEY #1

WRITER: Brian Pulido
ARTIST: Steven Hughes

We're two books from the end and we've run out of things to talk about. Wait…this book's kinda new. We can give you the story lowdown and stuff. Brace yourself: Some nutty angel tells Lady Death she'll be facing serious challenges in preparation for the future. So, a powerless LD finds herself in a frozen jungle where li'l jungle chicks beg her to free them from an evil lady/serpent called Agony. LD beats her, the jungle comes to life again, and Lady Death's zapped to some wacky desert.

NUMBER NINE

10. ANGELA #1

WRITER: Neil Gaiman
ARTIST: Greg Capullo

Woo-hoo, almost there! Aside from having the nigh-unmatchable selling power of Todd McFarlane's name attached to it (he sure is one popular li'l cowpoke, aye?), Angela also has the luxury of having Spawn's name attached to her. With a new limited series in the works, expect her early appearances to climb the charts.

And that's it. We're spent. Nothing left to say. If this were a Top 11 chart, we'd all be dead right now and you'd have to go read *Marvel Age* or something. Good night. W

NUMBER TEN

THE NEXT TEN

THE NEXT 10 HOT BOOKS AND THE COMPANIES THAT MAKE THEM

11. GEN13 #1 (REGULAR) IMAGE
12. MARVEL VERSUS DC #2 MARVEL/DC
13. SPAWN #9 IMAGE
14. LEGENDS...DARK CLAW #1 MARVEL/DC
15. SPAWN #1 IMAGE
16. THE X-FILES #2 TOPPS
17. AVENGELYNE #1 MAXIMUM
18. GENERATION X #1 MARVEL
19. PREACHER #2 DC
20. WOLVERINE #75 MARVEL

Bowen Designs Presents...

The Help Randy Out Contest

Master sculptor Randy Bowen is a busy guy. Heck, with Grendel and Hellboy statues, plus bookends, pins, model kits and now his latest creation, Decapitator, he's always up to something. Now he needs your help.

But how can you help, you ask? Simple. Tell Randy what you think his next project should be. Write (in 100 words or less) or draw a picture explaining what you think Randy's next creation should be. The talented Mr. Bowen will judge the entries and decide who the winners are, based on creativity and enthusiasm. You could be the proud owner of one of these great prizes!

Decapitator

PRIZES!

Grand Prize (1)

Grand Prize (1): Decapitator! One lucky reader will get a one-of-a-kind pre-production Decapitator model, hand painted by Randy himself! Each detail from the blackened toenails to dripping slime is captured in all its grotesque glory!

Second Prize (1)

Hellboy! Only four of these first-generation bust castings were ever made. This pre-production prototype is a casting taken directly from the original sculpture!

Third Prize (1)

Grendel! This elegant sculpted statue of Hunter Rose is signed by Randy Bowen and Grendel creator Matt Wagner. Only 50 pieces were ever signed by both Wagner and Bowen!

This month's contest is sponsored by Randy Bowen's Bowen Designs, a bunch of busy people.

BOWEN DESIGNS INCORPORATED

Fill this out, attach it to your entry, put it in an envelope and send it to: Help Randy Out Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Deadline is July 31, 1996.

Painstaking Legal Craftsmanship

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Bowen Designs and their immediate families or anyone who's ever actually decapitated someone. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card and attach it to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Help Randy Out Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Note: Brian Cunningham is not Randy. He's just anxious. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by July 31, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected based on quality and creativity among all properly completed entries by Randy Bowen. Winners will be selected by August 30, 1996.

For a list of winners, available after August 30, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Help Randy Out Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

The Help Randy Out Contest

DEADLINE IS JULY 31, 1996!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____ Favorite Play-Doh flavor _____

Did you attach your entry?

by Jon Warren

HITMAN IS A HIT!

Garth Ennis is a regular on our Top 10 list of writers, thanks to his unusual storylines and quirky characters. Ennis' violent and stylized *Hitman* has come out of nowhere to be one of DC Comics' hottest books, both in terms of sales and reader interest, and that's with only three issues on the market. Reports out of DC say that issue #1 was overprinted, yet it still managed to sell out.

Ennis and artist John McCrea are doing some pretty strange takes on characters like Batman and the Joker. *Hitman* looks as if it can do the same thing for mainstream DC heroes as *Starman* is doing for the company's Golden Age heroes. Most fun of all, reading *Hitman* can really weird you out, and that's about all we can ask for from a comic, right? Keep your eyes on this one—it looks like a winner! Oh yeah, word to the wise: check out *Demon* #43-#45 and *Demon Annual* #2 for early appearances of Hitman's star Tommy Monaghan.

***Hitman* is gunning for top honors as the industry's hottest book**

AMALGAMS: NOT SEEN, BUT HEARD ABOUT

Even though Amalgam Month has come and gone, a whole bunch of the Marvel/DC Amalgam titles are still on our Quick List, and still being passionately discussed by fans. More importantly, with Amalgam's overwhelmingly successful sales results, will we see more in the future? Both publishers interestingly declined to comment.

Here's a rundown of the most-talked-about Amalgam books:

• Legends of the Dark Claw

Dealers tell us this was the first Amalgam comic to sell out, and Dark Claw and Sparrow are the heroes everybody wants to see in their own monthly book. *Legends of the Dark Claw*

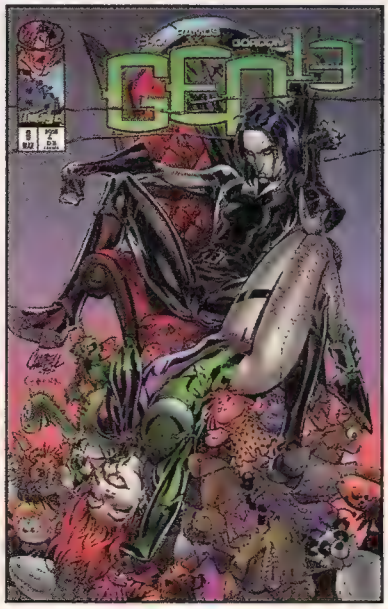
The Quick List — What's Hot in the Comic Book Market

• AMALGAM TITLES—As certain titles sell out, many readers are rushing back to their retailers and picking up titles they missed the first time around. *Assassins* is one of these, as is *Speed Demon*. We've got a feeling that all the Amalgam issues will be quite collectable, even if they're all put into a trade paperback somewhere down the road.

• *BONE*—Popping up again as a fan-favorite, and receiving better visibility now that it's distributed by Image, the wacky humor of *Bone* is a nice contrast to today's superhero action. A mass of early, short-run Cartoon Books printings makes this a highly collectible title.

• *GEN^{13}*—A fan-favorite that has once again hit its stride. Sharp art, interesting stories and a good example of the maturing of Image into an on-time, story-driven comics company. The short slump will benefit collectors who bought the issues others passed by.

• *GENERATION X*—This title's managing to hold the momentum granted it by the Fox telefilm. Big changes are promised to be in store for the future, so make sure you've got all those early issues!



• *PREACHER*—Retailers are finally matching their orders to the demand for this title, so you shouldn't have any trouble finding current issues. But past issues, especially the first two, are in short supply. (Try to pick up the trade paperback reprinting the first seven issues.)

• *SPAWN*—A new batch of great action figures, the *Medieval Spawn/Witchblade* crossover and the coming of *Spawn* #50 have pushed *Spawn* back into the spotlight. Issue #1 is always on our Top 20, of course, but look out for *Spawn* #9, #12 and #21 to continue to rise in value.

• *WOLVERINE* #100—The latest of Wolvie transformations, this book is a favorite with readers, but #75 is still not far behind. Retailers wish they'd bought a boatload of #100s, 'cause now they're going for $8 easy.

• *THE X-FILES*—Mega-exposure hasn't hurt the popularity of this book yet, and it might not ever. Issues #1-#3 are now in hot demand, and each new release, regardless of the format, sells well.

WIZARD'S TOP 10 HOTTEST WRITERS

1. Peter David — Hulk, Aquaman, Marvel vs. DC
2. Neil Gaiman — Sandman
3. Mark Waid — Captain America, X-Men
4. Garth Ennis — Preacher, Hitman
5. Kurt Busiek — Astro City
6. Ron Marz — Green Lantern, Marvel vs. DC
7. Karl Kesel — Daredevil
8. Chuck Dixon — Robin, Detective Comics
9. Scott Lobdell — Generation X, Uncanny X-Men
10. James Robinson — Starman

WIZARD'S TOP 10 HOTTEST ARTISTS

1. Todd McFarlane — Spawn
2. Joe Madureira — Uncanny X-Men
3. Jim Lee — Gen[13], upcoming Fantastic Four
4. J. Scott Campbell — Gen[13]
5. Billy Tucci — Shi
6. Joe Linsner — Dawn
7. Joe Linsner — Dawn
8. Joe Quesada — Ash
9. Greg Capullo — Spawn
10. Adam Kubert — Wolverine

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS AND ARTISTS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE RETAILER SURVEY.

WIZARD'S UP & COMING CREATOR

RODOLFO DAMAGGIO

Recently jumping onto *Green Arrow* with #100, this Brazilian artist is a cinch for telling the new, young GA's adventures. His knack for displaying both motion and emotion makes every panel jump off the page, and he adds an almost European style to the title. GA editor Darren Vincenzo says, "What sets Rodolfo apart is the combination of his draftsmanship—his amazing skill—and his attention to detail, coupled with his choice of angles and the almost-film-quality beauty in his storytelling."

is in short supply and high demand. We've been told there are no plans to reprint any of these titles, so this is it. If you don't have your copy, better get one now, before they skyrocket.

• Spider-Boy

Spider-Boy is the other Amalgam title that fans are demanding be made into an ongoing series. While the Spider-Man titles have been...interesting for a while, they sure haven't been much fun, and we think the enthusiasm for this book reflects that. *Spider-Boy* is also a near sell-out, and may yet prove to outpace *Dark Claw* in demand.

• JLX

JLX was the sleeper among the Amalgam titles. Sales started off kind of average, overshadowed by *Dark Claw* and *Spider-Boy* in fan response, then suddenly, as word-of-mouth got around, dealers reported that *JLX* was disappearing off the shelves. Fans were totally impressed with the spectacular artwork and one of the most character-bending storylines. You can probably still find copies of this one at cover price, but ya better hurry.

BAD GIRLS ON THE RISE

Lady Death and Shi, watch your pretty backsides! Witchblade is coming up fast behind you! *Witchblade* #1 is moving up our Top 20 list very quickly, thanks to current appearances in the *Medieval Spawn/Witchblade* mini-series and increasing sales on her own book.

Lady Death's *Odyssey* is selling well, proving that foil covers can still draw sales on the right books. And be sure to check out recent issues of *Gen[13]*, wherein Caitlin joined the ranks of Bad Girls, and did it (like she does everything) in a big way!

Broadway Comics' *Fatale* is gaining fan sup-

MARKET WATCHERS

Letters to the Price Guide

Q: Who gets distributed the "special" gold, silver and platinum editions from comic book publishers? Is it just comic book stores, or can individuals order them as well?

S. DiCesare
Cornwall On Hudson, NY

A: These so-called "special" editions are usually offered by publishers to comic stores through one or more of the major distributors. Your shop owner should know they're coming up and be able to order them for you. Other "specials" are available only through mail-order from the publisher, as giveaways or to winners of contests; these, you usually can't order.

Q: Will the *Wizard* Price Guide ever list the relative prices per grade for each comic? If you did this, you could crush your competitors' small hold on the marketplace and become a monopolizing giant!

M. Rupley
Placerville, CA

A: Sorry, but we'd rather devote the space to listing more titles.

Q: Is there a reprint of *Showcase* #4, featuring the Flash? Mine is slightly different from the one you pictured in issue #56.

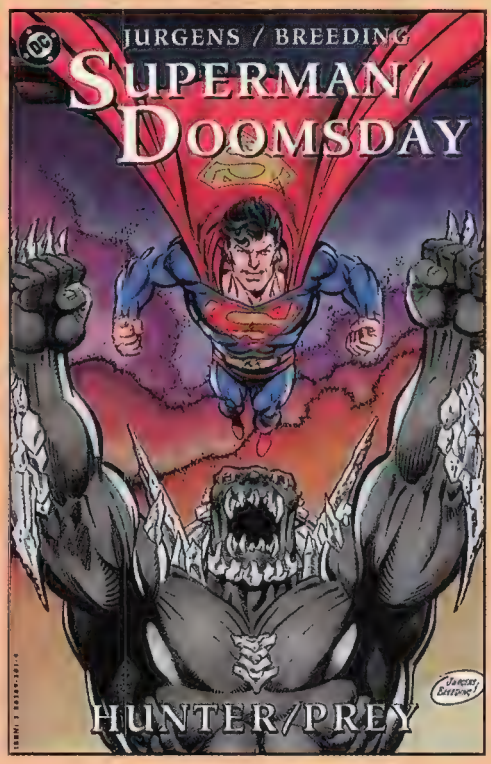
D. Hicks Jr.
Norcross, GA

A: We don't know of any reprint or variant edition of *Showcase #4*. Looks like yours is the real thing. Congratulations.

Q: Is there any chance of seeing a "corrections" section in the *Wizard* Price Guide? When the original error is corrected, I don't always catch it when updating my database monthly to coincide with the guide.

M. Farace
St. Louis, MO

A: We also use a database and have the same problem; it's difficult to pull out any changes, corrections or updates when we make them almost daily. This may be inconvenient for some collectors, but it allows us to keep totally up to date.



Q: I'm in possession of a *Shaman's Tears* #1. The cover is black and white, with no red. I was told this was an error and that there are less than 10 of these comics around. Is this possible? Or was my chain being jerked?

A. Christiano
New City, NY

A: Your chain was being jerked. We've never heard of such a variant cover, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist—you got one, right? But there's no way that less than 10 of them are around.

Q: I have a *Superman/Doomsday: Hunter/Prey* trade paperback that has a major misprint in it (like repeating half the book). Are all of them like this or is mine a rare incident? If it is rare, how much is it worth?

G. Jaynes
Sikeston, MO

A: No, they're not all like that (although repeating the first half of the book in the second half wouldn't seem too strange, considering some of the stories we see these days). And sorry, it's worth even less than Guide, because it's damaged. You might find someone who collects misprints who'll be happy to pay you Guide price.

That's a wrap, folks. See you next month with more answers to your questions.

—Jon Warren
Sweatin' to the Oldies

Got questions? Send 'em to:
Market Watchers
c/o Jon Warren
P. O. Box 2512
Chattanooga, TN 37409
Or send e-mail directly to the guy himself:
JonRWarren@aol.com

port after a shaky start (and some really goofy publicity and advertising). The overall look of her own book and increasingly powerful stories are making her very collectable. Remember that many Bad Girl books are not available in some areas, and may increase in value accordingly.

IMPULSE BUYER

We just have to mention this title, because everybody else does! *Impulse* just keeps on getting hotter, and those early issues are becoming rarer and rarer, yet they're still affordable enough for you to run out and pick up for your enjoyment.

REACHING FOR THE STARMAN

Like they used to say about those old Sgt. Fury comics, *Starman* may be the superhero title for people who hate superhero titles. The reluctant hero, son of the original Golden Age Starman, boasts one of the most original and best-used supporting casts around, as well as some of the scariest—and sexiest—villains. This is an action-packed book which really runs on characterization. Early issues are increasing in value, but are still available. **W**

Jon Warren, regardless of the format, sells well.

WIZARD® TOP 100

X-Men #53

The highest-ordered comic books for the month of APRIL.

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by comic book retailers across the country, the following is a listing of the highest-ordered comics for April. Check out the column on the right for an explanation of this month's standout books (listed in **boldface type**). **(CE=Collector's Edition)**

1. **X-Men #53 (Marvel)**
2. **Uncanny X-Men #333 (Marvel)**
3. Wolverine #102 (Marvel)
4. **Spawn #49 (Image)**
5. **Spawn #48 (Image)**
6. **Gen[13] #10 (Image)**
7. **Medieval Spawn/Witchblade #1 (Image)**
8. X-Man #16 (Marvel)
9. Generation X #16 (Marvel)
10. X-Force #55 (Marvel)
11. **Spawn/WildC.A.T.s #4 (Image)**
12. X-Factor #123 (Marvel)
13. X-Men Unlimited #11 (Marvel)
14. Cable #32 (Marvel)
15. The F. Adv's. of Cyclops & Phoenix #1 (Mar.)
16. Excalibur #98 (Marvel)
17. Amazing Spider-Man #412 (Marvel)
18. Spider-Man #69 (Marvel)
19. **Grifter/Shi #2 (Image)**
20. **Death: The Time of Your Life #3 (DC)**
21. Sensational Spider-Man #5 (Marvel)
22. Spectacular Spider-Man #235 (Marvel)
23. **Crusade Special: Shi vs. Tomoe #1 (Crusade)**
24. **Glory/Angela: Hell's Angels #1 (Image)**
25. Lady Death: The Odyssey #2 (Chaos!)
26. WildC.A.T.s #29 (Image)
27. **The Dreaming #1 (DC)**
28. Batman #531 CE (DC)
29. Superman #112 (DC)
30. Action Comics #722 (DC)
31. Incredible Hulk #442 (Marvel)
32. Adventures of Superman #535 (DC)
33. **Batman Black & White #1 (DC)**
34. Detective Comics #697 (DC)
35. Superman: The Man of Steel #57 (DC)
36. **Spider-Man: Legacy of Evil (Marvel)**
37. Star Wars: H. to the Empire #6 (D. Horse)
38. The X-Files #17 (Topps)
39. WetWorks #16 (Image)
40. Batman: Leg. of the Dark Knight #83 (DC)
41. Captain America #452 (Marvel)
42. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #51 (DC)
43. **Prophet/Avengelyne #1 (Image)**
44. Avengers #399 (Marvel)
45. Fantastic Four #413 (Marvel)
46. **Avengelyne #1 (Maximum)**
47. Star Wars: Splinter of the M.E. #3 (D.H.)
48. X-Nation 2099 #4 (Marvel)
49. Robin #30 (DC)
50. Thor #499 (Marvel)
51. Sin City: That Y. Bastard #3 (D. Horse)
52. **Avengelyne/Prophet #1 (Maximum)**
53. Cyberforce #22 (Image)
54. Purgatori Prelude #-1 (Chaos!)
55. Catwoman #34 (DC)
56. X-Men 2099 #33 (Marvel)
57. S. Wars: X-Wing—R.S.: P. Affair #3 (D.H.)
58. Azrael #18 (DC)
59. Green Lantern #74 (DC)
60. Professor X and the X-Men #8 (Marvel)
61. Artemis: Requiem #1 (DC)
62. **Robin Annual #5 (DC)**
63. Venom: The Hunted #2 (Marvel)
64. Wonder Woman #110 (DC)
65. Spider-Man Team-Up #3 (Marvel)
66. Weapon Zero #3 (Image)
67. The Flash #114 (DC)
68. Backlash #19 (Image)
69. Iron Man #329 (Marvel)
70. The Night Man/Gambit #2 (Marvel)
71. Untold Tales of Spider-Man #10 (Mar.)
72. StormWatch #35 (Image)
73. **Green Lantern Annual #5 (DC)**
74. Deathblow #27 (Image)
75. Superboy #28 (DC)
76. Preacher #14 (DC)
77. Vengeance of Vampirella #25 (Harris)
78. What If? #86 (Marvel)
79. Team 7 III: Dead Reckoning #4 (Image)
80. Maxx: Friends of Maxx Special (Image)
81. **Supergirl Annual #1 (DC)**
82. Spider-Man 2099 #44 (Marvel)
83. Sigma #2 (Image)
84. Silver Surfer #117 (Marvel)
85. Daredevil #353 (Marvel)
86. **Evil Ernie: Straight to Hell #5 (Chaos!)**
87. **Bone #24 (Image)**
88. DefCon 4 #3 (Image)
89. Silver Surfer: Dangerous Artifacts (Marvel)
90. Glory #11 (Image)
91. **Impulse #14 (DC)**
92. All New Exiles #7 (Marvel)
93. Prophet #6 (Image)
94. Aquaman #21 (DC)
95. **Hitman #2 (DC)**
96. New Warriors #72 (Marvel)
97. The Books of Magic #25 (DC)
98. Green Goblin #7 (Marvel)
99. **Chaos! Quarterly #3 (Chaos!)**
100. Youngblood #7 (Image)

AT THE TOP:

Without *Marvel vs. DC* crowding the top of the chart, most titles moved back up to their proper places this month. *X-Men* flip-flopped with *Uncanny X-Men* again and hit #1, probably due to the issue's major confrontation between Jean Grey and Onslaught. Along with Spawn's regular double-presence in the Top 10, he flexed his crossover muscle twice in April. Interestingly, the Witchblade team-up beat out the WildC.A.T.s one, probably thanks to its writer Garth Ennis: Coming off two hits, *Preacher* and the new *Hitman*, this guy's become a bankable name. The mutants and *Gen[13]* (a "Fire From Heaven" crossover issue) took over the rest of the Top 15. The major story in Crusade's *Shi vs. Tomoe* gave the book some sizable sales, and the company two books in the Top 25 (the other one being *Grifter/Shi*, helped by its Image connection). Spawn character Angela truly powered up *Glory/Angela*; its sales imply that she's more popular than Glory (whose regular book placed 66 slots lower) and should get her own series.

IN THE MIDDLE:

Vertigo's still pleasing its Sandfans: *The Dreaming #1*, presenting the Sandman's world and replacing his title, hit a respectable #27 this month, as the *Death* mini-series closed its successful run. Two different types of superhero books, *Batman Black and White* and *Spider-Man: Legacy of Evil*, intrigued readers enough to create large orders. Avengelyne's triple-book push fared well, with her ongoing series starting out strong chart-wise, in between two Prophet-able crossover issues.

IN THE SECOND HALF:

The first three DC annuals all placed in the Top 100 (with Robin on top); retailers noticed both the potential of the "Legends of the Dead Earth" story running through them, and their lower-than-last-year $2.95 prices. Looks like gore is still good, as the ultraviolent *Hitman*, and Chaos!'s popular *Evil Ernie* and *Chaos! Quarterly* offerings, squeezed into the chart this month. Meanwhile, *Bone* and *Impulse* continue to hang around, which is a good sign that lighter entertainment is still appreciated today.

ATTENTION COMIC BOOK RETAILERS:

If you're a retailer who would like to participate in our compiling of the Wizard Top 100 (and be a candidate for special prizes), please write to us at the address below.

Top 100 Coordinator
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064
or e-mail us at: WizardTGTC@aol.com

CBIQ

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

THIS MONTH, YOU CAN TEST YOUR MEMORY SKILLS AGAINST SUPERTEAMS THAT JUST WEREN'T COOL ENOUGH TO SURVIVE. THE BETTER YOUR KNOWLEDGE, THE MORE YOU'LL WONDER WHAT EVER BECAME OF THESE LAME HERO COMBINATIONS. THE ANSWERS'RE IN THIS ISSUE'S BULLPEN.

SCORE	RANK
0-4	**The Champions:** With three mutants on the team, including the Angel and Iceman, it's a wonder that they didn't call the team the Uncanny X-Champions.
5-14	**The Defenders:** With three mutants on the team, it's a wonder that they didn't call the team the Uncanny X-Defenders. Whoa! Major *déja vu*.
15-19	**Infinity Inc.:** Their parents won't let them join the Justice Society, so they start their own little club. That'll show them grown-ups.
20	**Youngblood:** Cliché superheroes *and* convoluted, nonsensical plotlines: with a combo like that, this group was sure to... Huh? Youngblood's been revamped and is back in comic shops? Uh...never mind.

HEY!

Okay, fanboys, get those gears in your heads spinning, because it's time for this month's CBIQ. A veritable plethora of useless information is at your fingertips, so dig in...and remember, this will be going on your permanent record.

1. What does your friendly neighborhood Thunder God, Thor, have to do to summon lightning?
A) He must swing his hammer in circles so fast that it creates an electrical field.
B) He must tap his hammer twice on the ground.
C) He simply points his hammer at his target and lightning rains from the heavens.
D) He must keep repeating the word "Shazam" in falsetto, all the while dancing an Irish jig.

2. According to John Lennon and Paul McCartney, who zapped Bungalow Bill right between the eyes?
A) Captain Marvel
B) the Flash
C) Green Lantern
D) Superman

3. Which two *Gen*[13] characters "got intimate," "did the nasty," "merged"—well, you get the point; so which two did it?
A) Rainmaker and Fairchild
B) Burnout and Rainmaker
C) Grunge and Freefall
D) Lynch and Bliss

4. During the "Contagion" storyline, Batman had to find an antidote for an ebola-like disease known as...
A) the Tick.
B) the Jerk.
C) the Clench.
D) the Runs.

5. Why can't the New Warriors' Firestar use her microwave power to its full extent?
A) In a battle with the Sphinx, she had her powers greatly reduced.
B) She accidentally killed an innocent bystander, so the government now forces her to wear a restraining device that weakens her powers.
C) Her doctor told her that the use of her powers might cause her and others to become sterile.
D) The villains she uses her microwave powers on refuse to rotate, thus not only negating the full extent of her power but also leaving the villains still frozen in the middle.

6. The X-Men's Storm may be one bad elemental mutant, but what irrational fear does she have?
A) agoraphobia, the fear of wide-open spaces
B) claustrophobia, the fear of being in confined spaces
C) arachnophobia, the fear of spiders
D) angoraphobia, the fear of fuzzy sweaters

7. Besides being able to change from a mermaid into a two-legged human, what other power does Superman's old girlfriend, Lori Lemaris, have?
A) lycanthropy
B) telepathy
C) pyrokinesis
D) levitation

8. Which of the following heroes were members of the '60s superteam the Sentinels of Freedom?
A) Captain Paragon and the Scarlet Scorpion
B) Torch of Liberty and Hellboy
C) Black Condor and the Ray
D) the Shield and Jaguar

9. What was the name and occupation of the man who would become Swamp Thing?
A) Prof. Jonathan Crane, psychologist
B) Dr. Alec Holland, scientist
C) Dr. Ted Sallis, chemist
D) Mr. Ray Ellison, bartender

10. Webbing ain't cheap. So, at what coffee shop does Ben Reilly, a.k.a. Spider-Man, earn his coin?
A) Central Perk
B) Jitters
C) The Daily Grind
D) Java Man

11. What religious sect brainwashed Jean Paul Valley into the superzealot Azrael?
A) the Order of St. Dumas
B) the Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos
C) the Order of the Knights Templar
D) the Royal Order of the Water Buffaloes

12. Who are Homer Simpson's co-workers at the nuclear power plant?
A) Lenny and George
B) Lenny and Carl
C) Lenny and June
D) Lenny and Squiggy

13. What do the X-Men's Bishop, Astro City's Samaritan and Booster Gold all have in common?
A) They were all really dead at one time.
B) They can all absorb energy directed at them and then project that energy from their bodies.
C) All have belonged to elite paramilitary groups.
D) All are from the future.

14. The Coda recently planted a bomb inside what item belonging to WildC.A.T.s member Zealot?
A) Her armor
B) Her sword
C) Her shield
D) Her helmet

15. Who is the villain that used the chemical DMN to turn Metropolis' citizens into demons?
A) Lord Satanus
B) Lex Luthor
C) The Joker
D) Brainiac

16. Spawn's future "evil" self is called...
A) Vacillator.
B) Malebolgia.
C) Ipsissimus.
D) Violator.

17. What's the name of Evil Ernie's malicious happy face pin that he wears on his leather jacket?
A) Happy
B) PermaGrin
C) Crossbones
D) Smiley

18. What assignment did Marvel's Taskmaster give Malibu's Siren when she was stuck in the Marvel Universe?
A) She was to infiltrate UltraForce and destroy them from within.
B) She was to infiltrate the Avengers and destroy them from within.
C) She was to kill Jim Rhodes, a.k.a. War Machine.
D) She was steal the designs for Iron Man's armor from Tony Stark.

19. In *DC versus Marvel*, who should have won the bout between Batman and Captain America?
A) Captain America
B) Captain America
C) Captain America
D) Captain America

20. What is the new Green Goblin's connection to the Daily Bugle?
A) He is a delivery boy for the Bugle.
B) Ace investigative reporter Ben Urich is his uncle.
C) He is the photographer that took Peter Parker's place when the latter moved to Portland, Oregon.
D) He is a clone of J. Jonah Jameson. W

CHARACTER PROFILE:

Spawn

BY MATTHEW BRADY

VITAL STATS

REAL NAME: Al Simmons
AGE: about 29
HEIGHT: (Al Simmons) 6'1"; (Spawn) 6'4"
WEIGHT: (Al Simmons) 210 lbs.; (Spawn) over 400 lbs.
HAIR COLOR: (Al Simmons) black; (Spawn) none
EYE COLOR: (Al Simmons) brown; (Spawn) green glow
FIRST APPEARANCE: *Spawn* #1
TITLE CURRENTLY APPEARING IN: *Spawn*
MAJOR ENEMIES: Violator, Jason Wynn, Malebolgia, Redeemer, Curse (presumed dead), Overt-Kill

ORIGIN

Al Simmons was one of our country's finest government assassins. But Simmons was also a family man, and slowly realized that he was doing horrible things in the name of the country he loved. When he confronted his commander, Jason Wynn, about his feelings, Wynn ordered Simmons' zealous comrade, Chapel, to kill him. And Chapel did so, quite efficiently.

Upon his death, Simmons found himself in Hell in front of its ruler Malebolgia, a devil who was willing to make a deal. Realizing that Simmons only wanted to return to his wife, Malebolgia offered to return him to Earth in exchange for eternal servitude. Simmons agreed and was returned to Earth, presumably to rejoin his wife.

However, Malebolgia had tricked Simmons and returned him to Earth in the form of a Hellspawn, one of Hell's commanders made out of pure "necroplasm." Upon his return, Simmons learned of Malebolgia's other trickery: he was returned five years after his death, his body was hideously scarred, he had no memories of his past and he was granted unbelievable powers. Simmons quickly learned, though, that his powers came with a price. When he exhausts his finite power, he'll be forced to return to Hell to prepare Malebolgia's soldiers for the upcoming apocalypse.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Since his return to Earth, Simmons' memories have returned, and he now realizes that his death was just one move in a power play on a much grander scale. The players in the game are connected by a string of corruption that includes the CIA, the mob, the police chief and a child killer named Billy Kincaid.

During Simmons' five years in hell, his wife Wanda remarried his best friend Terry Fitzgerald, and they had a daughter, Cyan. Due to his jarring appearance, Simmons is unable to contact his wife and can only watch her through windows. On the rare occasions when Simmons has spoken to her, Wanda has been terrified at the sight of him. He has yet to reveal his identity to her.

No longer able to show himself in public, Simmons has taken to the alleys of New York City, appointing himself king over the bums and winos. Unable to return to his family, Simmons has worked to punish all those involved in his death, turning power factions against one another and creating havoc.

Spawn's very appearance has shifted the balance of power in New York and many groups want Spawn dead. The alleys have been the sight of many battles involving killers sent to exterminate Spawn, or local toughs thinking they can make a name for themselves by bumping him off. Unwilling to use his hellish powers, Simmons has often relied on firearms to get his point across.

Spawn's presence on Earth, however, has not gone unnoticed by Heaven. On several occasions, the side of light has sent warriors to kill Spawn, only to have them meet defeat at his hands. One of the most notable warriors was an angel called Angela with whom Spawn consorted. As a result of their indiscretion, the angel Tiffany has taken it upon herself to punish both Angela and Spawn.

Lately, Spawn has been advised that more powerful players may have been involved in what ultimately led to his creation, and has had to rethink his vendetta. With the fight that gave his life meaning off-track, Spawn has had to find solace in punishing evil, frequently putting him into the role of reluctant hero. During one such battle, Spawn found himself teamed with the WildC.A.T.s, who took him to a future that he ruled after he had killed Malebolgia. Faced with such a grim future, Spawn now sees punishing evil as his chance for redemption, and a chance to escape Hell's grip.

UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

Following the events of *Spawn* #50, Spawn really goes to Hell. Literally. Says Spawn creator Todd McFarlane, "Spawn's trip through Hell will lead him into a relationship with his costume that reader's haven't seen in the first 30 to 40 issues. The costume is continuing to morph into what the true armor of hell is supposed to be."

RECOMMENDED HIGHLIGHTS

Interested in a taste of Spawn? Then be sure to pick up these choice issues recommended by McFarlane himself:

- ***Spawn* #5**—Spawn deals with the child-killer, Billy Kincaid. "It showed that our hero would push back harder than Superman or Batman in a given situation."
- ***Spawn* #12**—Spawn hunts his own killer. "It gives us a bit of background into what makes up the Spawn legend, as well as showing his playfulness with the bums in the alley."
- ***Spawn* #29**—Following the *Angela* mini-series, Spawn finds himself in middle America and "adopted" by a child with a dark secret. "This story gave us a chance to tackle a more serious social issue: child abuse."
- ***Spawn* #43**—While Spawn heals from the beating he took at the hands of Curse, wheels that were set in motion a long time ago begin to reach full speed with tragic results. "I thought that, visually, issue #43 looked cool, and it was the first time a major supporting character bit the dust in *Spawn*."

SIMILAR TASTES

If you're looking for other *Spawn*-type comics, here's what McFarlane himself recommends: "If you like *Spawn*, you'll enjoy *Batman*, as a creature-of-the-night character. I think that people would like books such as *Sandman* or *Sin City*, though I don't profess to be in the same class of writing as those two books. My goal has been to try and create a book that isn't quite like any other, but stands on its own."

Matthew Brady, who wrote something else in this issue, is not filled with necroplasm, nor has unlimited powers, but he'd come back from Hell for his wife 'cause she's really cool.

JUNK DRAWER

Little bits of everything that we couldn't stretch into a full-page newsy thing

by David Borak and the *Wizard* staff

THIS MADMAN'S A REAL YO-YO

Have you ever been jealous o' that Frank Einstein guy? Y'know, Madman, that freaky superhero who came back from the dead and hangs out with some real weirdos? Well, Dark Horse Comics is now letting you in on the fun! On sale this June is the official Madman Yo-Yo. This genuine Duncan (only the best for our boy Frank) was designed by Madman creator Mike Allred and features his snappy artwork. For only $6.95 you can Walk the Dog, Rock the Cradle and Skip the Weasel. (Okay, okay. So we're not too hip on our yo-yo lingo.)

Madman Yo-Yo

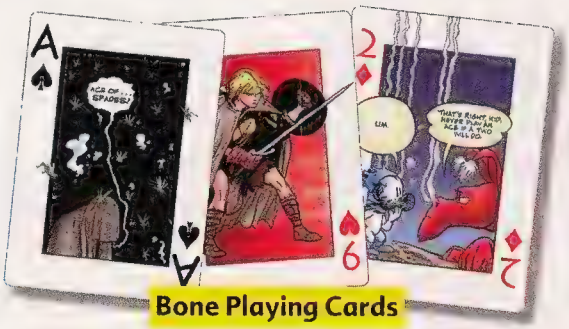
FIRE GOOD

Now you can be just like your buddies Marv and Dwayne from Sin City. No, no, we don't mean that you'll be so badly beaten your own ma wouldn't recognize ya. What we're trying to say is that Dark Horse Comics is offering a Sin City Zippo Lighter featuring new artwork from creator Frank Miller. You'd be the hit of the party with this baby! The high-polish chrome lighter retails for $29.95 and is due to hit stores in late August.

Sin City Zippo Lighter

FODOR'S GUIDE TO MARS

From the popular series *THB*, comes the ultimate travel guide entitled *Welcome to Mars: The Superweird World of THB* retailing for $19.95. Creator Paul Pope brings you an 80-page softcover book featuring all-new material about the world of *THB*. Published by Graphitti Designs, the book contains 24 full-color postcards that depict scenes and characters from the comic. Also included is an additional 32 pages that act as a tourist handbook to Plutonium City. This section contains an original story, map grids and an overview of Plutonium City itself. Heck, if you're lucky, there may even be an introduction by J'onn J'onzz. Look for *Welcome to Mars* this June.



Bone Playing Cards

PLAYIN' POKER WITH PHONEY BONE

Tired of betting on who's going to win the next Great Cow Race? Well ante up and check out these nifty new Bone Playing Cards by Graphitti Designs available in June. For $15.95 you get two decks featuring full-color pictures of all of your favorite characters from Jeff Smith's *Bone* series. And you won't find any holograms, foil, metal or chromium cards in these decks! Just your traditional poker playing cards with the regular Bone gang on 'em including Fone Bone, Phoney Bone, Smiley Bone, Gran'ma Ben, Thorn and more!

LADY DEATH MEETS 'BAYWATCH'

Oh no! Someone's drowning at the beach! Have no fear, 'cause Lady Death's here. (Hey, she even comes with her own floatation devices!) All right, so you won't be seein' this on "Baywatch," but you can lay out on the sand with the new Lady Death beach towel by Graphitti designs. Coming in June (just in time for summer), the Lady Death towel is a gigantic 35" X 72" and features six-color artwork by Jim Balent. The heavyweight velour towel has a retail price of $29.95 and is bound to keep you dry and sand free.

SOME CREATIVE STATUES

Be on the lookout for two funky new statues based on yer favorite Marvel heroes. Creative License has already released its Iron Man wall sculpture, retailing for $150.

Lady Death Beach Towel

Rogue Statue

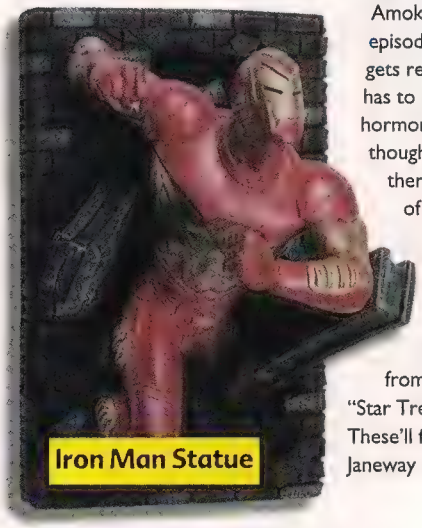
This hand-painted and pre-assembled, cold-cast porcelain piece, featuring ol' Shell-Head bustin' through a brick wall, is limited to only 2,000 pieces. So if ya want one, ya better get a move on! Also, coming in July is the Rogue sculpture finishing off the X-Men Sentinel Series. (Collect Gambit, Wolverine and Magneto to complete the set!) This hand-painted, cold-cast porcelain piece carries a suggested retail price of $150.

MARS ATTACKS YOUR BOOKSTORE

You've been horrified by the trading cards, the comic book made you wet your pants, and the impending movie has made you wanna scream your bloody lungs out! But now, Mars Attacks! can scare you in a new form as Del Rey Books plans on releasing two new terrifying hardcover novels based on the popular comic book and trading card set. Writers Nathan Archer and Ray W. Murill include all of your favorite giant insects, Martian death squads, and bikini-clad coeds in their two novels *Martian Deathtrap* (May 1996) and *War Dogs of the Golden Hoard* (July 1996), available in book stores everywhere. In addition, each hardcover will include two exclusive trading cards bound in the book.

EXPLORE STRANGE NEW COLLECTIBLES

Coming in June, Applause plans on releasing numerous Star Trek-related products from all of the Star Trek incarnations. Look for some wacky mugs in the shape of characters' heads for Dr. McCoy, the Gorn, Q and Neelix (How'd you like to stare at *him* first thing in the morning?) for $15 each. Also available, will be a pair of collectible Star Trek Dioramas limited to 2,500 each with a price tag of $60 apiece. One features the Voyager and the other is Amok Time (That's the episode where Spock gets really horny and has to keep his Vulcan hormones in check!), though chances are neither will be made out of shoe boxes, string and cotton balls. Plus, be on the lookout for various statues featuring scenes from your favorite "Star Trek" episodes. These'll feature Captain Janeway on the bridge, Neelix in the kitchen (making *hors d'oeuvres* for the bridge crew, no doubt), Q on a throne (from the episode "All Good Things"), and Picard and Dathan ("Shaka, when the walls fell!"). The scenes are priced at $20 each.



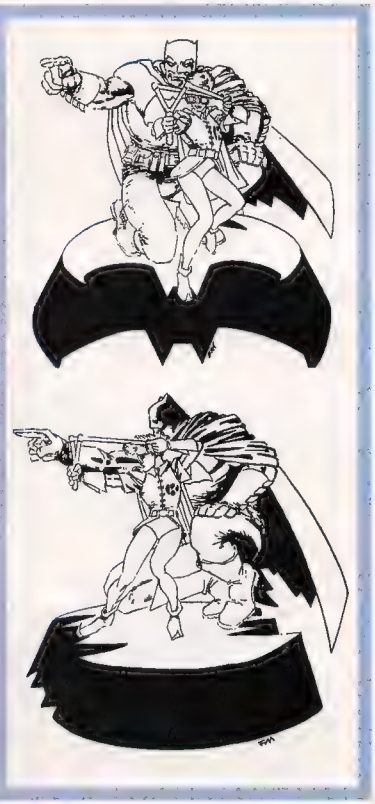
Iron Man Statue

Sulu Statue

BONUS!

THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, AGAIN!

Here are some early Frank Miller sketches for an upcoming Dark Knight statue. Celebrating the 10-year anniversary of Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, the statue should be on sale sometime in November. Sources inside DC reveal that the final base will most likely be different than the one pictured here.



HEY! Are you a company putting out some really nifty comic-related merchandise like Batman boomerangs, Incredible Hulk toilet paper or even a Spider-Man snow cone machine? Well, we'd love to run it in our groovy Junk Drawer section. (Of course, we'd much prefer posters, novels, T-shirts, sculptures, games, magnets, buttons, etc.) Please send any info to:

Junk Drawer
c/o Andrew Kardon
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920

JUNK DRAWER video games

by Steve Brown

We're Taking Control of your Video Games

What if we called the shots? What if your friendly neighborhood folks at *Wizard* gained control of all comic book licenses as far as making video games goes? Oh, there'd be some sweeping changes. First off, we'd mix and match characters like crazy. Then we'd get a strict monthly schedule of game production going. We'd put a freeze on the next generation software and maximize the potential of today's current systems. Whenever possible, *Wizard* would release scaled-down versions of our 32-bit titles for classic systems like the Intellivision, 8-bit Nintendo, and all the other systems gathering dust in your closet. (Yeah, Atari!) This bold gesture of backwards compatibility would unite gamers of all system sizes and a world of utopian grace would soon follow.

Yeah, we know different types of video games appeal to different types o' people. That being the case, variety and our nutty sense of humor will typify the first year's offerings. Anyhow, *Wizard*'s crack research staff sat down and came up with this preliminary list. Welcome to the future…

The Forbush Man 500—Superhero Speedway

GAME TYPE: racing/adventure
DIFFICULTY LEVEL: adjustable—all ages
GAME SYNOPSIS: Onslaught has captured Aunt May's soul and is threatening to auction it off to the highest bidder (bidders include Thanos, Darkseid, Mephisto, Doomsday and, yes, even Sherman Hemsley). As her soul hangs in the balance, Forbush Man strikes a deal with Onslaught: a race will be held, involving the worlds greatest heroes and vehicles. The catch, however, is that there can be only one victor—only one hero will walk away with his life and Aunt May's immortal soul. Choose between eight racers: the versatile and solid Batmobile, the seldom seen Spider-Car, the four-times-as-much-fuel-consuming Fantasticar, the crass commercialism of the Spawnmobile, Bandit and his classic 1977 black Firebird, Herbie the Love Bug, the General Lee, and the restrained powerhouse of Scooby Doo manning the Mystery Machine.

The race begins in Cherry Hill, NJ, and if you're the first to cross the finish line in Walla Walla, Wash., you and your hero win!

The Forbush Man 500—Superhero Speedway

Bad Girls Ballpark

GAME TYPE: sports
DIFFICULTY LEVEL: medium difficulty, hard on the eyes
GAME SYNOPSIS: Play America's favorite pastime with the baddest Bad Girls around. Draft Lady Death, Shi, Dawn, Razor, She-Hulk, Artemis, Xena and more for your own baseball team. Photo realistic graphics practically put you right into the game. Play against other hero teams including the Teensters (Impulse, Superboy, the Atom, Robin, Punky Brewster and more), the Stuffed Shirts (Alfred, Jarvis, Henry Peter Gyrich, Tony Randall and plenty of other "suits"), the Y.A.N.K.E.E.S. (made of every friggin' L.E.G.I.O.N. member, it's the largest roster in the league), and more! A special battery back-up lets you play an entire season right up to the famed World Series.

Bad Girls Ballpark

The Great Hero Games 1997

GAME TYPE: sports
DIFFICULTY LEVEL: tough, wimps need not apply
GAME SYNOPSIS: Tired of fighting crime, the world's finest superheroes decide to take a few days off and make some much-needed cash. The brainchild of perennially poor Peter Parker,

the Great Hero Games will decide once and for all who is Earth's mightiest protector, and make sure he or she's well paid. Events range from drunk deep sea fishing to nude arm-wrestling to midnight midget bowling to the infamous rotten egg toss. With some 49 events and gameplay requiring gamers to actually bathe before competing, you'll test your mettle against a horde of other heroes. Game variety enables up to four players to compete in the Games, as players can choose from the Hulk, Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, Ambush Bug, the Thing, 3-D Man, the Heckler, Slapstick, Mad-Cap and more!

Only the Short Can Save Him—A Micronauts Adventure

GAME TYPE: side-scrolling adventure

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: easy to learn, hard to master

GAME SYNOPSIS: In the classic tradition of the Atari 2600's *Microsurgeon*, a united taskforce of the planet's tiniest heroes is assigned a life or death mission. It seems the Kingpin has inadvertently eaten Puck and, unless your team can retrieve the Alpha Flight member before Mr. Fisk digests him, Wolverine will further mutate and get even crabbier, while Alpha Flight will rename itself X-Alpha Flight and become the newest monthly X-book on the block. Enlisted in your quest are the world's mightiest miniatures: Acroyear, Marionette, Bug, Ant-Man, Wasp, the Atom, and even Papa Smurf himself. Shrink down to microscopic size and travel through the Kingpin's grotesque internal landscape where you'll fight off plenty of angry red blood cells, half-digested cheese and even a rabid Twinkie the Kid.

Well, I hope you've enjoyed a sneak peak into a possible alternative video game future. I've got plenty of other great ideas but my editors threatened to beat the livin' tar outta me if I ever wrote another column like this again. So, till next time, keep your feet on the ground and keep reaching for the stars.

PLUG IN

The Latest in Video Game News

STAR WARS

LucasArts has announced that it will be porting over its popular CD-ROM titles to the Sony PlayStation, Sega Saturn and Nintendo Ultra 64. *Rebel Assault II* and *Dark Forces* are slated for the PlayStation sometime this summer. *Herc's Adventure*, a light-hearted adventure set in ancient Greece, is slated for a late summer release on the Saturn and PlayStation. In partnership with Nintendo, LucasArts is developing *Shadows of the Empire*, an original Star Wars adventure exclusively for the Ultra 64.

Among the new PC CD-ROM titles to be released in late '96 are: *Jedi Knight*, a sequel to *Dark Forces*; *Outlaws*, an action/adventure spaghetti western; and *X-Wing vs. Tie Fighter*, the ultimate space combat sim. ■ *SB*

IRON MAN AND X-O MANOWAR

Iron Man and X-O Manowar join forces this August in a video game crossover, following the heroes' team-up in June's two-part comic series from Marvel and Acclaim. Acclaim is pulling out all the stops on this game by combining the heroes and villains of the Marvel and Valiant Universes, and centering it around a joined universe. The evil powers from each universe, Mistress Crescendo and Baron Zemo, have come together to resurrect the Cosmic Cube.

This side-scrolling adventure stars a bundle of characters who make their first video game appearance, including: Yellowjacket, Absorbing Man, Melter, Titania, Goliath, Mr. Hyde, Blackout, Spider Aliens and the Jack Kirby classic...Arnim Zola! Character sketches for the game have been done by Bart Sears and Andy Smith on the Valiant side, and Dave Johnson on the Marvel side. *Iron Man and X-O Manowar* is a multi-leveled combination of fighting, shooting and flying, available on the Saturn, PlayStation, Game Boy, Game Gear and PC. A few new video game effects are being attempted for the first time, such as passage of time and visual environmental changes. If Acclaim can deliver on its initial game summary, this could be THE definitive superhero game. ■ *SB*

AEON FLUX

Aeon Flux is coming to the Sony PlayStation in late '96. As Aeon Flux, players will dive first-person into a world of acrobatics, pistol-packing, dangerously erotic, mission-driven action to capture the Demiurge, a supernatural being with the power to bring the dead back to life. Over 35 real-time 3-D levels promise bitch-blasting carnage. Viacom (who owns MTV) is attempting an exact exotic version of creator Peter Chung's world that will translate into the edgiest action game on the market. ■ *SB*

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

Ever want to hang out with Odo on the promenade or try out one of Quark's holo-suites? Well, you might be able to do just that with Viacom New Media's *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine—Harbinger* on CD-ROM. The 3-D animation techniques are complemented by the actual voices of the cast: Sisko, Odo, Kira, Dax and Quark. (Dr. Bashir musta been on vacation.) The game attempts to be as close to the Star Trek mythos as possible by using actual blueprints and photographs in designing the backgrounds and familiar locations. Besides featuring a mission that threatens the space station and the fate of a Gamma Quadrant race, players will get the chance to embark on training missions on the holo-deck! *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine—Harbinger* is currently available for the PC with a Macintosh version scheduled to ship in late 1996. ■ *David Borak*

Cyber WIZARD®

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Wizard World™ is *Wizard*'s new **America Online℠** area. Designed with comic fans in mind, it has tons of great stuff, including contests, price guides, forums, and chat areas. Many of your favorite comic creators even hang out and post messages there. Want to check it out? Sign on to **America Online** and use the keyword **"Wizard"**. For free software and 10 free hours call **800-754-4400**.

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bullpen

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT...

Wizard Editor-in-Chief Pat McCallum here. I write "Bullpen" every month, and this time around...there's nothing to talk about. No chili cook-offs. No softball games. Nothin'. So, in an effort to fill space, allow me to take you on a tour through my average workday here at *Wizard* HQ...

7:15 am Wake up to some loud Alanis Morrisette song. Feed my cats, feed myself, wash my soiled body parts and head off to Wizard.

8:30 Enter office I share with Editor Brian Cunningham. Exchange pleasantries, even though I know he wants my job and plots my death.

8:45 Daily 30-minute meeting of the *Wizard* art & editorial departments. Senior Managing Editor Joe Yanarella reminds me I'm late with this month's "Bullpen."

9:32 30-minute meeting breaks up. Go back to my office to work on "Bullpen."

10:47 Promotions Manager and "Magic Words" pop-icon Jim McLauchlin enters my office, asks who I think would win in a fight: one-legged ex-pro-wrestler "Mad Dog" Vachon hopped up on NyQuil or mythical *Wizard* Contributing Editor Marc Wilkofsky armed with the serrated blade off a tinfoil dispenser. I vote Mad Dog. Jim agrees, comments how Marc couldn't kick anybody's ass and leaves. I start writing captions for the toy and card price guides.

11:51 After spending an hour editing out "Dukes of Hazzard" and Twisted Sister references from editorial material, explain to Copy Editor Andrew Kardon that he's gotta stop trying to slip them in the book. He retorts that Sheriff Rosco's dog is named Flash and that it's a perfect comic tie-in. Weak with hunger, I see his logic and agree.

12:00 pm Lunch. It's off to Taco Bell, where Managing Editor Scott Gramling eats what we assume is seven pounds of taco-flesh. We all agree that Scott will be dead by age 30.

1:01 Back at Wizard and marveling at how Administrative Assistant Jen Cavallo's sneeze is like the sound a small Disney rodent would make if you squeezed it. Start writing the polybag text for *Wizard*.

2:00 Weekly *Wizard* staff meeting. Editorial, design, advertising, promotions, research, marketing and online services get together to share info. The air conditioning is on the fritz, we all have gas from Taco Bell and Scott's been missing since lunch. We call the meeting short and stagger back to our desks. I start assembling the Top 10 list for "Bullpen."

4:23 Research assistant Phil Colligan stops in and wants to know how the rumor started that he was sexually assaulted by a manatee. I comment I did it, and if he doesn't like it there's a million high school kids that would love his job. Phil leaves and I go back to working on "More Picks."

5:00 Head to the warehouse and lose repeatedly to Designer Arlene So at Ping-Pong. She eventually calls me half-a-sissy and leaves undefeated. I go on to lose to everyone until I face Phil. I remind him of that "million high school kids" thing and I win 11-zip.

6:00 Head on home, feed my cats, make some pasta and turn on pro wrasslin'. The Undertaker's cool.

12:30 am Fall asleep reading *The Count of Monte Cristo*, wonder whatever happened to Scott right before I nod off.

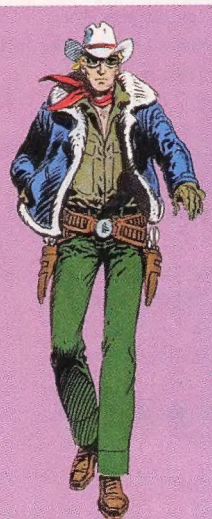
7:15 Repeat.

MORT OF THE MONTH

BALLOON BUSTER

Having to dig through old comics for these morts of the month is my penance for roasting insects with a magnifying glass as a kid. With the manly Balloon Buster (a.k.a. Steven Henry Savage Jr.), I've gotta be about even. Anyway, this ornery cowpoke swore on his dad's deathbed that the name "Savage" would be remembered. So did he go off to hock Slim Jims and wear tassels? Nah. This tough-as-leather *hombre* made a name for himself by popping German combat balloons during WWI. Yeah, like the Little Rascals couldn't pull that one off.

MORT-O-METER:



TOP TEN

Top 10 rejected names for "Unfinished Business" (now "Heroes Reborn")

10. "Here's Hopin'."
9. "Image East."
8. "The Age of Apocalypse."
7. "The Guff is Empty."
6. "I don't give a $*#@ if I'm drunk! I think it's a good idea and I vote we do it!""
5. "Hell Froze Over."
4. "1,000,000 Monkeys at 1,000,000 Typewriters."
3. "The White Album."
2. "Truth or Dare."
1. "Last Chance Before We Bolt."

CONTEST WINNER

TUG & BUSTER, *WIZARD* #54

Here's freakily follicled Douglas Rensch of Columbus, Ohio!

C.B.I.Q. ANSWERS

from page 187

1. B	6. B	11. A	16. C
2. A	7. B	12. B	17. D
3. B	8. B	13. D	18. C
4. C	9. B	14. B	19. A
5. C	10. C	15. A	20. B

WIZARD profile

Here's looking at...

BEAU SMITH

Beau Smith used to hurt people for money. But it's not what you think. "It was always about abuse," says the good-natured West Virginia native. "Women were being beaten up by their husbands and boyfriends and I would get these calls [from them]. It was like, 'Here's the bar he frequents. This is when he's coming out. Why don't you go and talk to him?' Abuse of any kind has always been at the top of my hit and hate list."

Which is why the 41-year-old writer, and currently director of promotions and marketing for Todd McFarlane Productions and *Spawn*, finds comics a more acceptable outlet for his rage. "It's a good outlet because I can see justice brought out in the right way without anybody ever getting hurt."

Beau Smith, born and raised in Huntington, W.Va., picked up comic books (a lot of *Lone Rangers* and the first issues of just about everything Marvel) even before he could read. "I got hooked at a very early age and never let go of it. I wrote my first story in the third grade. It was about alien monsters invading the school and how we never saved the teachers because we didn't like them. I started drawing about that time, but that petered out about the 7th grade, when I came to the conclusion that I was never going to get any better."

Smith began submitting stories to Stan Lee at Marvel at age 13, and would occasionally receive encouraging replies. "I'm sure he was just being kind to a crazed kid," chuckles Smith, "but it kept me going." Smith went to college at Marshall University and received degrees in Journalism and Public Relations. He didn't enter either field, instead settling into a series of sales and marketing jobs. This experience, along with a determined letter to the editor writing campaign and general convention schmoozing, resulted in Smith not only landing a sales and marketing job at Eclipse Comics but also his first writing credits, penning "Beau LaDuke's Tips for Real Men" as a back-up for various issues of *Scout*. He followed that series up with the equally inspiring "Beau LaDuke and The Dogs of Danger," backing up the *Swords of Texas* series.

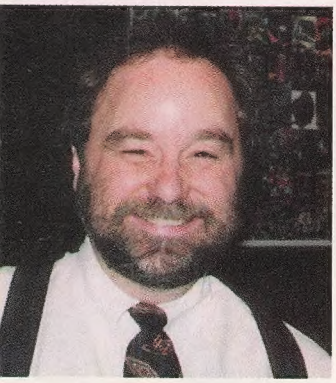


Photo courtesy of Beau Smith

Smith later continued to burn the candle at both ends, handling business and sales duties for Image and McFarlane while continuing to churn out stories for such books as *The Black Terror*, *Parts Unknown*, *Green Lantern Corps Quarterly*, *Guy Gardner: Warrior* (for which he had a two-year run), *The Berserkers*, *Boof and the Bruise Crew* and *Good Girl Quarterly*. Currently he is working on another run of *Parts Unknown* and prepping the series *Wynona Earp* and *Stonebreaker and Thorpe*. "I've always held a full-time business job while I've written, and it's proved the ultimate situation for me. It helps me to know the business end. It helps me in terms of knowing what the public wants. It's like having my cake and eating it too."

Beau Smith's writing style is cut from the rough-and-tumble style that has gone a long way toward giving him the title of the "Real Man" of comics. "I don't do drafts," he laughs. "I just sit down and make it up as I go. It's a real spontaneous thing. I guess that's what comes from being a born liar."

by Marc Shapiro

First comic read...
Batman #143. It was the alien vs. Bat-Hound story. I've never forgotten that book.

Favorite comic of all time...
Daredevil #15

Favorite work of your own...
The Black Terror

Comics you read...
Milk and Cheese, *Xenozoic Tales*, *Fatale*

The one person you'd like to meet...
John Wayne

Superpower you would most want...
The power to impose my will on others.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....
Hostess cupcakes

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...
As a kid, my Captain Action and G.I. Joe action figures. As an adult, my guns.

Things you collect...
Books on safaris and the Old West; guns and knives.

Person who would play you in a movie...
Richard Karn from "Home Improvement"

Favorite cartoon...
"Space Ghost"

People you would most like to work with...
Andy and Adam Kubert

Favorite musical performer...
Delbert McClinton

Favorite TV show...
"Rat Patrol"

Last good movie you saw...
"The Usual Suspects."

Last good book you read...
West of Hell's Fringes, by Glen Shirley

If you had the power of The Beyonder...
I'd make everybody just like me.

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DCI

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the album arrives this summer

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